

# The Dragon Quest

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Summary: Sequel to the Daypeace Encounter. Three months since Nissa's arrival on Berk, the riders decide to go on a quest of a lifetime to explore the unknown regions of the Barbaric Archipelago. Their quest is one of both necessity and thrills. Join them as they explore new islands, make fantastic discoveries all while trying to find the lost Nighfury pack.

## 1. A questing we will go

\_Welcome to the sequel of Daypeace Encounter. I hope you enjoy this new story as much as the original story. I also hope that you will also support my original work; \_Battle for the Stars, \_by purchasing it or at least asking your local library to carry it. Thank you.\_

\_ Quests are a normal part of Viking life. In fact your not considered a real Viking until you've completed at least one successful quest. The more dangerous the quest the higher the honor and rewards. The question for every teenage Viking is what kind of quest will you decide to go on?\_

Berk was a bustle of activity for both the Vikings and the dragons. The annual inventory was underway as they took stock of how much of their supplies they had and what they would need to get from the nearby islands to make it through the coming year. The dragons were busy preparing for the coming winter by preparing their little island and making sure they had enough shelter and food to last them until they migrated once more for their mating ritual. The previous year hatchlings had reached juvenile status so while the adults went off to mate they would stay to defend their territory. They wouldn't be mating until they reached about their third year.

At the Dragon Academy the teens were conducting a new training regiment. Nissa was in her dragon form battling against each rider and dragon team. The difference was that the riders were on different dragons. Hiccup and Astrid had swapped dragons while the Twins both

rode on Meatlug while Snotlout took Belch and Barf and Fishlegs was on Hookfang. The objective was to learn how to work with another dragon in an emergency.

Nissa smirked as she twisted in between Stormfly and Toothless. Meatlug tried to belly flop on her only to be kicked in the chest. She used her tail blade to slap back the two heads of Belch and Barf before tackling Hookfang to the ground. She let out a chortle as she took to the air. \_"Come on can't you catch me? I thought you were the best of the best." \_

\_ "Oh you are just asking for it aren't you? Come on chubby work with me already!" \_

"Maybe we should rethink our strategy. A head on attack while blazing isn't such a good idea," Fishlegs wailed as the Nightmare set himself on fire. The rider screamed and fell off into the water trough as Nissa misted Hookfang. The Nightmare crashed into the cage doors snoring as if he was a hurricane.

"Come on big girl do a lave blast on her!"

"No, do another belly flop that was fun!"

\_"Would you two stop arguing already and pay attention to the fight?" \_

\_ "To late you three!" \_ Nissa laughed trapping them in orange barrier. Whipping around she head butted Snotlout off Belch's head be biting down on Barf's mouth. The result was a mini explosion that took out the dragon. Hearing the incoming spikes she she covered up with her wings deflecting some of the damage. Hiccup was struggling to stay on Stormfly as the Nadder launched another round of spikes. From behind her Astrid was doing her best to make Toothless fly, but was having trouble with the saddle. Giving up flying she ordered Toothless to fire a plasma ball at the same time Stormfly shot out more spikes. At the last second Nissa rolled out the way so both riders were taken out by the others attack. Giggling Nissa reverted to her human form as the riders and dragons picked themselves off the ground. "Well that was a good workout. I haven't had this much fun in a long time."

"You don't have to rub it in. Man why are we doing this anyways? We work best with our dragons so why do we need to know how to ride each others?" Snotlout whined.

"Yeah it feels like a complete waste of our time. We could be doing something useful instead," Ruffnut said. "We could be helping with deconstruction of the old ships for new parts or gathering metal for weapons."

"I'm with my sister on this and I hate chores."

"Guys, this is as important as any chore. Astrid demonstrated the need for us to understand how to work with different dragons when we got the Book back from Alvin. In times of crises we might be separated from our dragons and need to rely on others for help. I know this first session didn't go so well, but if we keep practicing it will work out."

"Hiccup's right everyone. We need to be able to adapt to changes at a moment's notice. Its not just the Outcasts that we have to worry about. The other tribes in the archipelago are just as dangerous and there are still rogue dragons out there. If they decide to come here looking for food we have to be able to defend ourselves."

"We're especially vulnerable right now considering how our supplies are dwindling. Its getting harder to find metals in the woods and the trees are starting to thin out. I heard the adults talking about a raiding trip to get more supplies. Considering how late in the season there might not be anything to plunder."

"You still have the recycled metal from those failed perches you can use. Sure its still a bit charred from all the lightning strikes however it still should be useable right? How about using the leftover material from the Thawfest games. I'm sure there's plenty of that lying around."

"Nissa you can stop making fun of us anytime you want. You enjoyed performing at the Thawfest games. I know I should have consulted you about the metal and lightning except for the fact you weren't on the island at the time!"

"Part of my responsibilities is to try to find out more about your neighbors and how to keep peace. The only reason Daypeaces know about lightning being attracted to metal is because of our talks with the descendents of the metal and lightning dragon. How was I suppose to know your god Thor was going to go crazy with creating a storm to show you how much he liked having targets to hit?"

"If you two are done bickering we have to get back to the village now. Honestly you two are worse then the twins sometime if you ask me."

"We'll take that as a compliment!"

The village was a bustle of activity as everyone was taking stock of their supplies and compiling lists for Stoick to review so he could figure out what they needed to replace. The younger children, freed from their lessons for the day, helped their parents out with the counting practicing their numbers and writing. In the skies above the dragons were flying about with their own supplies making up their shelters and making plans. Most of the village still couldn't speak Dragonese yet. However they recognized certain words when they heard them.

"Twenty, twenty one, twenty two catapults. That's three less then last year. I'm also short on a couple of bolos, six hatchets and most of our shields are in need of replacing. You think that peace with the dragons would keep our stock from going down," Gobber complained to Ula who was helping him out.

"You're still trying to restock after someone blew up the armory. I imagine our little kidnapping stunt didn't help things much," Ula commented.

"Well there's no use bellowing over spilled yak milk. We need to see what we can recycle and what we can't use anymore. I'm telling you each year it seems like Berk has less and less to use. Even with the stuff we dug up from that pit it isn't making much of a difference

this year."

"Don't forget Queen Rayna will be sending her trading party in a few months. That should help restock your supplies and can't you trade with some of the neighbors your at peace with?"

"Perhaps, but this is the time of the year all the tribes in the area are closely guarding their resources. Even a plundering raid won't help much. Oh don't give me that look raiding is part of Viking tradition!"

"So was dragon slaying, but you don't do that anymore. Honestly sometimes I wonder if you can ever be more peaceful. Hello Steinar, how are the dragons doing on their little island?"

"Better then expected. The adults have managed to carve out a few more caves for the kids and have stocked them with plenty of sand, rocks, and leaves for cold nights. They have water, but clearly not enough on the island to support the entire population. Its no wonder the adults spend more time here. Their food situation is stable for now I worry though they might go through it faster then they anticipate if another surprise storm shows up. Our cousins have become somewhat dependent on the families they have bonded with."

"That's a good thing for relationships; bad if it comes down to who gets fed first in a crises. I hope that everything works out for the tribe."

"Don't you two Berk has had shortages in the past and we've survived. We're hardy people who do whatever it takes to survive."

"I hope you're right Gobber. Still I wonder how well the tribe will last."

That night the Daypeaces had invited the Haddocks and Toothless over for dinner. The Daypeaces had moved into a small comfortable house near the chief's house. The three of them had decorated the home with stuff from Xanadu. The home was very cozy and comfortable. Tonight they had prepared a dish from Xanadu with a mixed fruit dish and a seasoned meat platter with fruit juice. Toothless was snacking on some salted fish from Xanadu which was tastier then the usual cod.

"I forgot how much I enjoyed food from Xanadu. Its nice of you to share. Do you have anymore of this stuff to share with the village?" Hiccup asked as he gobbled up some figs.

"Not really, the last of our supplies from home will only stretch for another two weeks. We have done our best to make our food last, but their are no natural freezers here to keep our food from spoiling," Nissa remarked. "How did the inventory go today?"

"We're nearly done, but its not looking that good. Our supplies are a lot lower then expected. I don't know what we're going to do. Gothi is also worried we might not have enough medicinal herbs to last until the next trading session. I'm starting to wonder if we may need to do some raids to survive."

"We already have antagonized our neighbors by having dragons on our

island. I'm certain that raids would ruin any chance we have of forming diplomatic relationships for the future. Instead of raids we need to consider doing some quests. I remember how mom use to go on quests and come back with the most marvelous treasures. She use to bring back gems, food, and a whole lot of cool stuff."

"\_A quest sounds like it would be a lot of fun. We haven't had much of a chance to simply explore. The closest we ever came was the journey to Xanadu. It would be nice to see what else our corner of the world has to offer." \_

"The a questing we will go, only instead of a treasure quest it will be a scientific explorer quest!"

"Come again? You want to go questing for science stuff?"

"Oh don't be so literal Stoick. The princess is merely suggesting that the teens go on a quest to explore the rest of the Barbaric Archipelago. In our time here it seems that much of the area still remains a mystery. Considering how Berk is in need of more supplies it would be prudent to explore the area to see if we could find more materials," Ula explained the the chief.

"It would also help the dragons out if we could identify new packs and their territories. I know you haven't been raided since you made peace with our cousins from Dragon Island, but there are still many packs out there that you haven't befriended. I wouldn't want to get on the bad side of any Timberjacks or Skrills should they come searching for more food around here," Steinar added to the group.

"Oh this would be a great chance to see if we could find out what happened to Toothless's pack! I mean its weird to find a Nightfury by himself, especially one being controlled by a dragon queen. Toothless, did you get separated from the pack fifteen years ago, when my kind came to investigate the possibility of a recruit? You don't appear to be much older then twenty or so."

"\_I can't really recall spending much time with my pack. I was about three years old just reaching adulthood when I got separated from the pack. I recall us flying towards our own private retreat to ride out some bad weather. A storm came out of nowhere. There was ice and heavy rain. We tried to avoid the lightning bolts. I recall my mother trying to help me stay aloft in the storm, but then the winds picked up. I couldn't stay in the air and I remember crashing on a island. When I woke up I was under the spell of the dragon queen and couldn't do anything, but what she wanted. "\_

"Toothless that's awful. I'm so sorry that you got separated from your family. I wish you had told me sooner. Maybe we could have gone searching for them."

"\_Where would we even begin to search? Nissa's right when she says my kind haven't been seen in fifteen years. Nightfuries are tough dragons, but we reproduce at a slower rate then most dragon species. Our eggs need more then hot water to avoid exploding. We need sand to keep us at a prime temperature and material to protect our eggs from cracking to soon. Its a miracle if entire clutch hatches." \_

"Toothless, I can't convey how sorry I am that you were separated from your pack and I'm even sorrier that your kind has gone into hiding to avoid going extinct. I do promise if we are allowed to go on this quest we'll search to the ends of the archipelago to help you find your kind."

"Don't get ahead of yourself Nissa, I still haven't given you permission to go on this quest."

"Come on Dad you always said I needed to go questing to prove myself."

"The last time you went on a quest without permission you ended up buried under a ton of rubble and nearly killed when a treasure chamber fell on top of you."

"I lived through it didn't I? Come on Dad the gang is feeling really restless since we got back from Xanadu. I know you're worried about me going off on another adventure. Still I want another chance to prove myself and this quest could go a long way in helping Berk survive in the long run. I really want to help Toothless find his pack."

"What happens if you run into rogue dragon packs? That Scaldron nearly ate you alive! Then there was the time you nearly got killed by that mother Typhoomrang because you took Torch out of the forest. Just because you have a way with dragons doesn't mean it will protect you from getting hurt."

"Dad, I have an empathy with dragons you know that. I'm also a lot stronger then before. I really want to do this."

"I don't know, we need as many hands as possible to help restock our armory and Mulch and Bucket need help with the animals."

"If we can convince the gang to go with us and one of my Honor Guard chaperons us will you consider letting us go?"

"Yes, if you can do all that then I will give you permission to go."

"Great! Hiccup and I will talk with the gang tomorrow. You won't be sorry!"

The next day at the Academy Hiccup and Nissa were trying their best to convince their friends to go on a quest with them. The riders were a little reluctant to go on such short notice and when the seasons were about to change. Also the purpose of the quest wasn't inspiring some of them.

"You really expect us to go looking for more metals and plants for healing? Come on that's lame! It just sounds like a lot of work mapping out the rest of the archipelago and writing about what we find. If you were talking about finding treasure I be all for it," Snotlout informed them as he groomed Hookfang.

"There will time to look for treasure on this quest. Besides, isn't acquiring knowledge treasure?"

"Not to us it isn't. When would we get to blow things up or fight

with other tribes?" Tuffnut asked.

"We'd be investigating unknown islands filled with wild dragons. Who knows who else is out there? We could find a whole new tribe out there for us to befriend."

"Or start a war with, that might be fun until your Dad yells at us."

"Are you guys really that afraid to explore the unknown? I thought you were Vikings! Nothing scares you."

"What happens if one of us gets hurt or we run into trouble? There are so many ways we could die out there. Its almost the changing of the seasons. If we leave now we could get caught out in a bad storm or lost with no way to return home."

"Fishlegs would you stop with the whining? I thought you wanted to have people sing songs of our heroic deeds? This is our chance to prove ourselves in the eyes of the village. If we managed to help with the shortage by finding more supplies the entire village would be indebted to us."

"Astrid's right everyone. I promise this quest will be filled with adventure, danger, and treasures. It could be fun mapping out the rest of our home and helping our village. Not to mention the most important reason for going on this quest."

\_"Which is to find out what happened to the rest of my pack. All the other dragons have packs with family and friends to help out in the hard times. I have no one besides the rest of you to belong with. I want to know if my family is still alive."\_

\_"Toothless we want to help you out really we do its just..."\_

\_ "Meatlug we all know how you feel about going on a quest when the juveniles are acting up. This is the time of the year we start preparing them for their first long winter alone. Its true they'll be by themselves defending Berk, but we still have a few months before that happens. The kids will be fine without us. They seem to do just fine without us around," \_Stormfly pointed out to her female friend.

\_"It would be a lot of fun to meet up with other packs. Find out how they managed to avoid being turned into slaves for most of their lives," \_Belch spoke up.

\_"I would personally love a chance to see how we stack up against wild dragons. I bet we could have a good tussle. I always wanted to see if a Zippleback could defeat a Snaptrapper in a fair fight," \_Barf added.

\_"You know how I feel on the subject. Any chance to show what an alpha I am is a good day. Plus I wouldn't mind exploring the area to see if we can find something new to eat."\_

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_ "Always thinking with your stomach aren't you Hookfang? Whoa no
need to get violent just stating a fact. So all dragons in favor of
going on a dangerous quest roar. Roaaaaaaaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrrrr
rrrrr!"
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"You heard our friends they're ready to go on a quest. Are we really going to disappoint them by refusing them? This is the kind of adventure that legends are born from. We could go down in history as the greatest Vikings whoever lived."

"If Hiccup is this excited about a quest then I'm going to prove myself. I might actually have a chance to show off my new brains. Count me in."

"We're in it. I want to see what's out there."

"Yeah and to fight other dragons and tribes!"

"If Meatlug is going then I'm going."

"Yeah let's do it!"

"This is going to be the best quest ever!"

Later that day Hiccup was confronting his dad about his promise. They were at the forge inspecting the new weapons. Stoick was still reluctant to let his son out of his sight. He was worried that something bad would happen to him even though Ula promised to keep an extra close eye on the boy. "Come on Dad you promised if I could convince the other riders and get a chaperone we could go!"

"It's too dangerous. You don't know what's out there."

"That's the reason we're going on this quest. You spent most of your life searching for the dragon's nest, why can't I spend my time learning more about the archipelago and finding Toothless family? I promise I'll take every precaution and we'll turn around at the first sign of real danger."

"Then that would defeat the purpose of the quest wouldn't it? Stoick, let the boy go. I seem to recall you begging your father to let us go on a quest after you had barely recovered from a dragon bite. You're always going on about how the youngster's need to prove themselves well this is their chance," Gobber insisted looking his best friend in the eye. He knew that Stoick was worried for Hiccup's safety, but at the same time the teen had never wanted to prove himself this much before. This quest, while unusual, would go a long way in helping both Hiccup and Berk grow.

Stoick let out a breath he didn't know he was holding. "Alright you have my permission to go. Tell the others to start packing for at least a month long quest. I want to inspect everyone's bags to make sure you have enough supplies. You'll leave in two days after I write up a list of supplies you'll need to look for."

Hiccup hugged his dad thanking him before running off with Toothless to tell his friends the good news. Stoick watched his son go feeling pride at the man he was becoming. He was sure if Val was still alive she'd be proud of their son as well. He was still concerned for Hiccup's safety, but he knew his friends, especially Nissa and Toothless, wouldn't let him get hurt.

"Don't look so worried, Hiccup's stronger than he looks and considering he has streaks of purple in his hair that's saying a



lot."

"This isn't something to joke about Gobber. In case you haven't notice every time the teens go on a quest Hiccup gets hurt or nearly dies. He lost his leg against the Red Death, nearly died in a cave in for the search of Hamish the Seconds treasure, and almost became dragon when he was on Xanadu. Let's not forget what happened when he went with you on the search for the Bone Knapper. I think with that kind of track record I have every right to be concerned for his safety."

"Stoick, we're Vikings. Its an occupational hazard that we nearly lose our lives on quests. If I recall correctly Val nearly lost her life on several quests she went on, but somehow managed to survive. Hiccup's inherited her talent to survive risky situations. I think she would approve of how he's handled himself on his quests."

"I know she would be proud, but I can't stop worrying about him. I understand why he wants to go on this particular quest so badly, but..."

"But nothing everything will work out fine. Just give the teens a chance to prove themselves. It will go to helping Berk in the long run."

At the Daypeace's house Nissa was busy packing her travel bags. Since she was use to going on journeys she was an expert when it came to packing the essentials; extra clothes, warm sleeping bag, notebooks and colored pencils for recording stuff, healing herbs, and a map. She was also packing extra food, water and her mace. In the rafters above she heard Ula packing their camping supplies along with anything else they would need. "This is so exciting! Our first Viking quest, oh I can imagine the fun we're going to have."

"We'll be having fun indeed, but more importantly princess we'll be assisting in an essential mission of discovery. I am looking forward to using my cartographer skills. Its not often I get to practice them," Ula replied from above. "I wish you were coming with us Steinar. Keeping an eye on seven teenagers and a pack of dragons will not be easy."

"Hey I'm not that much trouble! I'm very mature for my age. I'm practically an adult."

"Until you turn a hundred and thirty five my princess you will be treated as the teen you are. You're friends may have had a few personality changes yet some of them can be difficult to get along with. I pray to Helios that the Twins and Snotlout don't decide to cause to much trouble."

"If they start to act up their dragons will knock some sense into them."

"Violence is never the answer to the problem. Are you sure you'll be alright by yourself on the island?"

"Ula, stop worrying about me. Everything will be fine. I'm going to make sure that Stoick doesn't go stir crazy while your gone. Just try to relax and enjoy this trip."

"Somehow I doubt this trip will be anything except relaxing."

The other riders were also busy making preparations for their trip. While Gobber gave the dragons a check up to make sure they were all healthy enough for the trip the kids with their families help were packing their bags. Snotlout wanted to take a whole arsenal of weapons with him, but his mother forced him to pack some extra blankets and tools they might need for gathering supplies. She also reminded him to bathe so that wild animals wouldn't scent him for dinner. Fishlegs mother made sure that her son packed extra flint and torches for night. The Twins were charged with carrying the food/care kit for the dragons. Astrid made sure they had enough extra warm clothes for chilly nights and Hiccup packed some metal for repairing Toothless tail fin. In the end they had enough supplies to last them a month on the trip.

Two days later everyone got up bright and early. The dragons had eaten a big breakfast and their scales were gleaming in the sunlight after being cleaned and tended to. The riders tacked on their saddlebags double checking everything. Ula gave all the teens a lecture about staying with the group and the consequences of what would happen should they fail to listen to what she said. Several people had come to see them off. Stoick was also there to give the usual questing speech.

"The seven of you are embarking on a dangerous quest seeking out both treasure and knowledge. You will encounter many dangers on your journey. Never forget your training that will help you survive. This quest if successful will bring about much glory for all of you. We shall sing songs in praise if you return successfully. Take care of one another helping each other to survive. Please be careful."

"Don't worry Dad, everything will be okay. We'll be back in a month safe and sound. Everyone ready? Then lets fly!" Cheers and shouts trailed behind them as the riders took off in a northeastern direction. The new quest had begun.

## 2. The Isle of Whisper Timber

It had been about a week since the group left Berk and in that time they had mapped out a small part of the archipelago. The new islands they had come across were small with different plants and animals. Many the group had seen before, but once and awhile they come across a new species of bird or flower. Ula was very strict in how they approached the animals and handled the new plants. She wanted to make sure that no one got hurt. They took samples and drew images of everything they saw. It had been a pretty good adventure so far however they had yet to encounter any dragon packs or find valuable resources to take back to Berk.

At the moment the group was flying across the waters heading for a new island in the distance. They had just finished mapping a small island, more like a small rock, and wanted to get to the next island by nightfall. The group was flying diamond formation for extra protection. As they flew they would take turns swapping positions so each dragon could get a chance to rest on the air flow from the others.

"Well this has been fun hasn't it guys? Who knew there were so many islands that haven't been explored? This map is coming out nicely don't you think bud?"

\_"I'll take your word for it. Dragons have no need for maps. We remember migrational paths from landmarks and our natural instincts. We never get lost," \_Toothless responded.

"If that's true then why are we out here searching for your pack?"

"Snotlout don't be mean."

"Come on I'm just making a point. As much as I'm enjoying this trip I'm getting bored. You promised there would be excitement, danger, and especially treasure. Well I haven't had any of that so far on this trip. When are the good times going to start?"

"We're with Snotlout. As fun as it has been gather plants and drawing birds we want to find some new dragons to battle with!" Tuffnut shouted over the roar of the ocean.

"At the very least I would love to have a wild animal attack during the night. It would be so cool to blow up our campsite then have to rebuild it," Ruffnut added.

"Well I'm enjoying this trip so far. These flowers we come across are really cool. Not only do they have a lovely scent to hide our body ordure, the nectar can be used to add flavor to our frozen boar meat. I hope we find more of them to take back to Berk. I'm sure the rest of the villagers would enjoy new flavors for their food."

"I like these feathers we found. They'll make a comfortable blanket once they've been washed and sewn into the cloth. Who knew feathers could be so comfortable to wear?"

\_"Yes flowers and feathers are nice. But I want a challenge! None of the predators on the islands we've investigated so far have offered a challenge! The wolves turned tail the minute I set myself on fire and the whales were scared off by my roar. How am I suppose to be an alpha if no one puts up a good fight?" \_ Hookfang whined. The Nightmare had been bitter for the last two days whining all the way.

\_"Do you ever stop whining Hookfang? I swear you spend more time whining then I do preening and that's saying something. This quest has only just begun. I'm sure as we continue to explore the islands around here we'll find someone for you to fight. Maybe they'll even trounce you so we can stop listening to your whining. Hey stop that! Oh you are just asking for it!" \_ Stormfly growled as the two dragons started attacking each other. Their riders tried to calm them down, but they weren't listening.

Belch and Barf saw the fighting and decided to put an end to it. Releasing the gas they blinded the two fighters before blowing them up. The resulting explosion left both dragons covered in soot and grime. The Zippleback laughed at the sight of seeing the bigger dragons trying to shake off the soot which refused to come off.

\_ "Soot really looks attractive on you two. Maybe you should wear it more often," \_ Barf said.

\_ "If your having trouble getting it off maybe a freezing bath in the ocean will get you clean. I heard salt water is good for keeping scales nice and shiny," \_ Belch added. The twin heads bumped each other in joy. They were to busy celebrating to notice that Stormfly and Hookfang were about to retaliate when Meatlug got between the two giving them a look.

\_ "Do you two really want to do that? I don't want to have to deal with Ula punishing us all because you two couldn't behave. I'm still feeling the sting from when she blasted us with her fire. My head still hurts from all the knowledge she put into our minds about avoiding danger. So can we please just get along until we reach the next island?" \_

\_ "Hey is everything okay back there? You're starting to fall behind and Ula is getting anxious. We have a lot of ocean to transverse before we get to the next island and there aren't any places to take a break. Have you been fighting?" \_

\_ "Just a little rough housing is all. Hookfang needed to blow some steam off. It won't happen again. Come on everyone lets pick up the pace. If we can reach the island before nightfall maybe we can do some hunting for some real meat instead of frozen fish again." \_

\_ "Children, I thought I told you not to dilly dally! I sympathize with your boredom, but we have a lot of ground to cover and I don't want to see anymore fighting whether its human or dragon related understood? These waters are unknown frocked with hidden dangers. We haven't seen any tidal class dragons, but that doesn't mean there aren't other dangers such as monstrous whales or giant squid waiting for an unsuspecting prey to get close enough to eat!" \_ Ula barked at the group as she looped back to give each of them a reprehensible look. Everyone had the decency to look chastised. \_ "There is a reason I was asked to chaperone this quest and it wasn't because of my disposition. I promised the chief no unnecessary risks and I meant it. Now hurry up and stay in formation!" \_

Sometime later they finally saw their destination. It was a large island that looked more oval then round with tons of trees and rock faces. The beach was narrow filled with rocks and riptides. A partial ice flow was locked against the north coast. After circling the island a few times they finally came across an outcropping near the treeline that would provide them some shelter for the night. The group landed sending a few rocks spilling down the cliffs. As soon as Ula reverted to her human form she started issuing orders.

"Alright we have about an hour and half until nightfall so let's set up camp. Astrid; I spotted a stream nearby so why don't you fetch us some freshwater. Ruffnut and Tuffnut, you two are in charge of setting up the tents. Snotlout your in charge of setting up the perimeter. Fishlegs, your in charge of supper tonight. We still have some frozen meat and some vegetables we can eat. We'll restock in the morning. Hiccup, you tend to the dragons needs. Nissa will help me with getting the rest of the grounds set up. Move it everyone we're burning daylight."

"She's a worse then Gobber and Stoick combined," Snotlout muttered

only to receive a smack upside the head by Ula for his sass. Knowing it was best not to anger the woman further he stuttered an apology and hurried to complete his task.

Hiccup got to work removing the saddles from the dragons and rubbing lotion onto their scales to counter any rashes that might have developed from being ridden so long. After doing that he gave each a dragon a look over to see if there were any injuries or signs of disease before tending to their talons and teeth. He had just finished filing down Hookfang's teeth when Nissa came up behind him. "Need any help? We're done setting up the campsite. Ula's using the time to update the map while the others finish their chores."

"Stormfly could use a good rub down if you're up to it. Okay, your done Hookfang. Why don't you help Barf and Belch hunt down your dinner? I think I saw something large by the ice flow that could feed you guys for a couple days."

\_"I hope its whale. I haven't had that yet, but its suppose to be tasty."\_

\_ "Yeah, let's hope the blubber doesn't make us fat."\_

Nissa shook her head as she watched the two dragons fly off. Personally the thought of munching on whale meat made her nauseated. Whales were highly intelligent and gentle creatures. She understood that whale meat was a stable part of the diet of a Viking, but that didn't mean she had to eat it. Instead she focused on the task at hand cleaning Stormfly's scales until they sparkled in the sunset. "Whose the prettiest dragon on the island? You are yes you are. Alright your finished, why don't you check on Astrid? So, how are you enjoying the quest so far?"

"I have to admit I don't miss not having my life in danger every minute of the day. Its been fun cataloging the new species we encountered and learning how to make maps. Ula is quite talented with getting the scale right. Has she come up with a name for the island yet?"

"No, she wants to explore a bit before choosing a name. Names have power so its important to get it just right. I'm surprised we haven't run into any dragon packs so far. My understanding was that this area was filled with dragons, but so far we haven't come across any of them."

"I know its weird. I'm starting to wonder if we'll ever find clues to the whereabouts of Toothless's pack."

"Don't get discouraged Hiccup. We've only just begun. I'm sure that we'll find some clue that will lead us to Nightfuries locations."

"If you guys are finished chatting dinner will be ready in a few minutes. I hope you like smoked yam with lettuce," Fishlegs called out. The two friends laughed deciding to join their friends for a hearty meal.

It was a cozy meal as the dragons munched on a narwhal carcass, Vikings enjoyed their meal by the light of a roaring fire. Each of

them couldn't wait until daybreak so they could start exploring the island. Hopefully they would finally find something worth bringing back to Berk.

"From what I saw the trees here are very strong and sturdy. They be perfect for using as building material. The only question would be how to transport them back to Berk and if it would be worth the trip," Astrid commented to the group.

"I for one am hoping that tomorrow we find some gems or metal once we start digging into the ground. The rock here is just right for finding caves rich in precious metals. I bet I find a chunk of gold the size of my head."

"We heard a lot animal calls when we set up the tents. I bet there something dangerous out in the woods."

"Maybe its wolves or bears. Oh wouldn't it be cool if it was some crazy creature we've never seen before?"

"What's to stop the predators from sneaking into camp to steal our food or worse attacking us while we sleep?"

"Fishlegs calm down, we've got dragons remember? They'll protect us from any harm so don't worry."

"We'll also be taking shifts for guard duty. I trust the perimeter set up, but one can never be too careful in unexplored territory. I'll take first watch and wake up Nissa in two hours. Remember to use the buddy system when you answer the call of nature. I don't want anyone getting lost in the dark."

"We know Ula, no leaving the camp grounds and dispose of our trash as far away from the camp as possible. Keep our weapons at the ready, put out the fire before bed. We're not babies. Sorry didn't mean to be rude."

"Mind your manners Princess, this island is certainly large enough with the perfect habitat for dragon packs. Just because we haven't seen any doesn't mean they aren't out there. Remember we don't want to antagonize them by making them think we're going to take over their territory. Do you understand that cousins? No posturing or fighting! Now its getting late why doesn't everyone clean up and go to bed. We'll start exploring the island after breakfast tomorrow."

The night passed without any incident and the riders all woke up refreshed. The dragons were already up and finishing the remains of the whale from the previous night. After eating a healthy breakfast Ula informed them of what they were doing that day. "Alright here is the agenda for today. We are going to stick together and explore the woods documenting the local flora and fauna. We know this island has some caves so we will go spelunking to see what inside them for awhile. After that we'll start restocking our supplies. We need to start collecting materials to take back. That means we'll need some containers to hold our booty in. Hookfang and Stormfly; I need you to head down to the beach and collect sand, shells, anything you can find that can be repurposed. Barf and Belch, can you two work together long enough to collect fresh water and meat for us? Meatlug; we'll need help with compacting the booty to fit the containers.

Toothless; your in charge of looking for clues to your packs location."

"Ula, how long are we planning on staying on this island?" Nissa asked.

"Its a decent size island with abundance of resources. I figure we'll stay here for at least another two days to ensure we collect enough resources for Berk. Now are there any other questions? No? Then lets get started."

The forest was immense with tall trees, thick shrub, and carpeted in grass. The sounds of animals could be heard as they walked deeper into the forest. The riders were nervous as they walked deeper into the trees. "Have you ever seen trees like this? There taller and thicker then the ones back home. We could make a dozen boats out of one tree alone," Astrid commented as the group settled into a clearing. Hiccup and Fishlegs were making sketches of the plants they had come across. The twins were busy looking for animals tracks to identify while Snotlout was in charge of examining the area for material to use for weapons. Nissa was nearby exploring the rest of the area trying to find a cave for them to explore.

"The trees do seem a lot healthier then the ones back home. Do you notice how thick the branches are and how shiny the needles appear? That's a sign that the soil here is really fertile for growing. We should really consider taking some of it back to Berk. I'm sure we could use it to help with the farming," Fishlegs said. He had just finished sketching some new flowers he discovered. Carefully, with a gloved hand he picked a sample and placed in a little fanny basket for later study. The group continued to catalog the forest until their dragons returned an hour later after completing their tasks.

"The pine needles would be a great comfort for the dragon shelters. Not to prickly and very warm on a cold night," \_ Meatlug called out. She and the other dragons were busy gathering up branches and some of the rocks to use for sleeping. Stormfly seemed to have found a great scratching post coming across a moss covered rock. She was rubbing against it purring as she did.

"Hey I found some great mud we can cool down in. I just love how bubbly it is," \_Barf and Belch called out from the next clearing over. The Zippleback was having fun taking a mudbath and the Twins were about to join them when Ula grabbed them by their ears and dragged them back to the task at hand.

"You can play in the mud later. Right now I want a report if you found any animal tracks. We need to identify what creatures live on this island and what risk they pose to us."

"Ow ow let go! All we found is some squirrel and boar tracks! Maybe a few bird prints, but that's it!"

"We haven't found any dragon tracks yet however we're not discounting the possibility. My ears are twitching which means there is something dangerous nearby."

"Your ears twitch when dangers nearby? That's something new. My dad says his bones feel super cold when something bad is about to

happen."

"Guys! I found something cool!" Nissa shouted. They all hurried over nearly falling into some holes just outside of a rather large cave. The cave didn't appear to be natural, the edges weren't smooth, but jagged and the holes were pretty wide with bits of scales and digested food in the soil. "I think we've found our proof there are dragons on this island."

"\_These holes appeared to have been made by a Whispering Death. They love to burrow through the ground and live in caves," \_ Toothless said after sniffing the holes. \_"I'm picking up multiple scents from the holes. There could be an entire pack here on the island."\_

\_ "Whispering Deaths would be right at home in the soil and rocks of this island. The caves here would also provide shelter and a place to raise hatchlings, but I sense they're not the only ones on this island. Something about the forest here is making me anxious. I don't know what it is, but it feels unnatural," \_ Meatlug informed them. She kept glancing around at the forest as if it would solve the problem.

"\_Now that you mention it; the trees are very unique in the growth pattern. The height of many of them has been shaven down and we noticed several logs lying about near the ice flow when we were hunting yesterday. These clearings seem to be unnatural as well. As if they came to be as an afterthought," \_ Toothless commented to the group.

"What does that mean bud? You think this island is home to multiple dragon packs like Dragon Island?"

Before Hiccup had a chance to answer the group was frozen in terror by the echoing of a roar across the island. Turning around slowly the group had only seconds to duck as a large Timberjack dive bombed the group cutting several trees in half. Seconds later several younger Timberjacks were worming their way into the clearing on the ground snapping their jaws at the group. The kids dove out of the way as Ula stood her ground throwing a punch at the youngsters head only to miss as they twisted their S shape heads out of the way. They let out a squawk in distress calling for more members of their pack to come to their rescue.

"Everyone run for the campsite now! Don't attempt to engage them!" Ula commanded manifesting her dragon startling the Timberjacks. Ula growled a warning firing a stream of fire at the youngsters. The teens were about to disregard her command and help when the ground beneath them started to shake.

"What's going on? Is this an earthquake?!" Fishlegs shouted.

"I don't think this is an earthquake. I think we got the attention of the Whispering ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Hiccup shouted as the ground erupted with several giant heads with gnashing teeth narrowly avoiding the Vikings. Hookfang, Stormfly, and Barf and Belch managed to grab their riders and take to the sky. The others weren't so lucky.

Hiccup and Fishlegs managed to get on top of their dragons while Nissa was attempting to manifest when she tripped over an exposed



root rolling into the cave. The opening was coming down and her foot was trapped between two boulders. Without hesitation the boys went after her ignoring the snapping jaws of the Whispering Deaths and ember blasts. They managed to get into the cave just as it collapsed. There was a collective hiss agreement as the group dove back into the earth going after the trapped riders.

\_"Princess Nissa hold on! Ahhhhhhhhhh, I don't want to fight you!"\_

\_ "Then you shouldn't have trespassed on our territory draki! I won't allow you to steal our home!" \_ The adult Timberjack thundered. "\_You and your humans will not destroy the beauty of our island with your savage ways!"\_

\_ "You tell them Alpha! We'll handle the kiddies. Make them regret ever stepping foot on the island," \_ one of the youngster shouted ducking to avoid Stormfly's spikes. They started flapping their wings creating turbulence for the riders.

"We need more room to maneuver, let's lead them out of the forest and towards the cliffs!" Snotlout suggested as he ordered Hookfang to twist out of the way of the youngster's long whipping tail.

"What about Hiccup and the others? They're trapped in the cave with the other pack coming after them!"

"We can't help them Astrid if we can't convince the Timberjack's we don't want to steal their territory or destroy the island," Ruffnut called out. The group was flying in and around the trees ducking under fallen logs. They could hear the Timberjacks following them as they made their way deeper into the forest hoping to stumble across a larger clearing.

"Right now the best thing we can do is help ourselves. We wanted a battle and now we got one. Sis, we need some cover."

"Barf gas them, Belch be ready to explode it." The heads nodded in agreement as Barf breathed out an enormous amount of gas chocking the youngsters. Belch quickly ignited the gas causing an explosion knocking over several trees to fall over and start a mini avalanche from a nearby cliff. The dragons tried to avoid the falling rocks unintentionally losing their riders who fell towards the ground miraculously landing in a soft pile of brush.

\_"ASTRID, SNOTLOUT, RUFFNUT, TUFFNUT!" \_ the dragons shouted all at once. They dove after the humans only for them to be attacked in the air by the backup the youngsters had called for. Several females and a few males started circling the three dragons lashing out with their claws and tails. The Berk dragons had no choice, but to defend themselves and hope for the best with their riders.

The kids weren't having any easy time as the youngsters gecko walked into the clearing firing blasts at them. Snotlout tossed his friends some hatchets he managed to hold onto during the fall. The kids used them to block the claw strikes and strike back at the youngsters.

"I enjoy fighting as much as any Viking, but we didn't come here to steal your land! We're on a quest to explore the archipelago! We want to know more about your island, not take over it," Snotlout shouted

as he caught the tail and tossed it back tipping over his foe.

\_"Vikings are nothing, but dragon slayers! Once your done using those poor prisoners you'll slay them and use their skins to decorate your shelters!"\_

"Those dragons are our friends! We'd never harm them!"

"Yeah we're at peace now with the dragons can't you tell?"

"How else would we know how to speak and understand Dragonese?"

Back in the cave the others weren't having much luck either convincing the hissing Whispering Deaths that they didn't mean any harm. After freeing Nissa from the rocks the small group started running through the tunnels with only a little torch to light the way. The shaking caused by the burrowing dragons caused them to stumble and nearly plunge off a crevice into a deep hole.

"We can't outrun them and there's no visible exit for the dragons to fly out of. Whispering Deaths are Boulder class dragons like Meatlug. Can't she do anything to help us?" Hiccup demanded.

\_"There's to many of them for me to handle by my lonesome. Even if I chewed up and spat a dozen lava coated rocks the Whispering Deaths could just climb or burrow out of the way."\_

\_ "Deaths are also highly intelligent nearly on par with my own kind. They could be leading us into a trap so they can eat us."\_

"Then we'll just have to try talking with them. There must be something in this cave we can use to defend ourselves with. We just need to look around and hey stop! I need to take a closer look at this."

"Nissa, this isn't the time to be examining rock formations! We need to get out of here right now before those dragons reach us."

"In a second Fishlegs! This is important if I'm right then we can yes! Look what I found," Nissa said showing them a large orange yellowish glob. "This is some quality amber. If we burn this it will produce a scent that will lead the Deaths in another direction, to a place of our choosing. We can then try talking with them."

"Are you sure about this?"

"Positive. I've seen it done before. Come on help me dig some of this up. Okay let's go!" Nissa shouted just as some more Deaths tried to snap them up. The dragons quickly burnt the amber filling the tunnels with a musky scent disorienting the pack. Encouraged by their success they hurried along the passages searching for a large cavern for them to trap the pack. They were going deeper into the caves and had almost stumbled across a good spot when they were surrounded by the entire pack.

"Wait, stop please we don't want to fight. We didn't come to the island to steal anything or take it over. We came to explore and learn about its inhabitants. If we had known you were here sooner we'd have asked permission to explore or if it was alright if we took

something off. Please believe us when we say we don't want to fight. You can trust us, we're your friends," Hiccup said as he carefully slid off Toothless's back. He loosened his knife and tossed it away also dropping the amber. He held out his hands in a non threatening gesture approaching the largest and presumably the leader of the pack.

\_"Do you honestly expect us to believe you human? You have shamed the Nightfury by forcing him to be his mount."\_

"Toothless is my best friend. I would never force him to do anything he didn't want to do," Hiccup responded, startling the Deaths with his understanding of their language. The others also voiced similar thoughts assuring the Deaths they hadn't met any harm. Hiccup reached up and gently patted the leader's nose showing him that he could be trusted. Slowly the Deaths started to relax and everyone calmed down enough to talk.

\_"It is strange to come across a human who is so dragon like in nature. Its stranger to see a dragon and human working together, but the strangest thing is to see a Nightfury and Daypeace getting along. I assumed you would be at each others throats because of the bad blood between your kind, but that is not the case," \_ Tunneler, the leader of the pack, commented as he observed the group.

"Toothless saved my life and owe him a debt of gratitude for being such a good friend to Hiccup when I couldn't be around. Humans aren't all bad Tunneler. The Vikings of Berk are learning to live in harmony with one another."

\_"Berk? Oh you mean the island of hairy humans. We have tried to avoid that place ever since we escaped from the Dragon Queen's clutches. We use to be slaves there, carried through the air by other dragons and then dropped on different islands to collect food. We'd burrow deep gathering as many subterranean animals as we could before being flown back. It was never enough. Many of our kind perished to the Queen's monstrous appetite. We tried to escape, but if you can't fly its hard. One day we were dropped by our carriers and landed on some floating logs. They carried us far away until we ended up this island. Its been our home ever since. We hoped it would be a sanctuary from threats. That is why we responded so negatively to your presence on the island," \_ Tunneler explained.

"That's such an amazing story! Did your pack create all the tunnels and the cave? The network you built is truly dynamic and must stretch across the whole island."

\_"They do, we've dug several miles underneath finding underwater streams and many precious metals along the way. They help sharpen our teeth as we dig. We even helped carve the different cliff faces with constantly climbing up and down them when we fished," \_ Digger, Tunneler's mate, told the group.

\_"We would love to see more of your home and learn more about your island. Can you show us the way back to the surface?" \_

\_ "It would our pleasure. Just follow us."\_

The riders and Nissa got back on their dragons walking through the tunneles observing as the Death burrowed through the earth. They

could see the roots of the trees firmly attached above soaking up the water from the underground streams and saw how the holes helped let in air. As the Deaths munched on different animals and the occasional tree it wasn't hard to see how their feces helped create a more fertile soil. Finally the group emerged back onto the surface where they were greeted by their friends and the Timberjacks. It appeared they had worked out their differences as well.

"Hey guys, so you made some new friends as well I see."

"The Timberjacks are actually pretty friendly once you get on their good side. Turns out that Timberjacks have a sense of humor," Astrid told them gesturing to where the Twins were busy playing tricks with youngsters. They would hide behind trees and pop out to scare them while the youngsters snaked their necks around attempting to nip the riders in the butt. Their parents scolded the youngsters whacking them gently with their claws.

"I apologize for our attack on your group. We have lived on this island in isolation from other packs and humans for so long we have forgotten how to entertain guests. The adult Daypeace has assured us you mean no harm, that you only wish to explore and learn more about our home. I still feel a bit uneasy knowing that other humans will know of our island and might come to destroy its natural beauty," Alpha said, his eyes looking at the riders with some distrust in them.

"Just because your home is going to be on our map doesn't mean we'll take over the island. Our tribe would rather stay on Berk then mess with two ferocious dragon packs such as yourselves," Snotlout replied.

"My rider is correct in his assessment. While your home offers much its to far out of the way and a bit nippy for the humans we live with. Even I'm finding a hard time dealing with the chill from the ice flow in the north. You have a good supply of prey, shelter, and space for maybe one small pack of Terrors not any of us larger ones though." \_

"How is it that you maintain the health of your island so well? From what we've smelled and seen so far it with two competing packs it must be difficult to get along so well." \_

"Not as difficult as you would assume Zippleback," \_Bark, the alpha female of the Timberjacks, informed him. "We have worked hard to maintain the island. They're are plenty of open spaces to hunt for boar, elk, and other small prey. The waters are teeming with fish and the occasional whale pod to snack. We've made our homes by cutting down and stacking the trees to form shelters. If we need more space or better views of the forest floor we just trim a few branches or scratch in holes. With such healthy forests its not hard to rotate the different patches to use for creating nests for our eggs on the beach." \_

"Of course why didn't I see it before. The two packs here have a symbiotic relationship that benefits not only them, but the whole island!" Ula exclaimed.

"What's symbiosis?" Ruffnut asked.

"Symbiosis is the partnership between two different organisms that provides something to one another for survival. I'm sure you all noticed the trees here are all different sizes and thickness correct?"

"Yeah, when they were chasing us we passed through thicker growth. There wasn't a lot of shrubs and bushes on the ground. I didn't see many flower patches either," Tuffnut added.

"That's an old growth forest. These forest help maintain the unique ecosystem for many of the animals here as well producing much of the rich oxygen your breathing in. Some of the old tall trees are actually dead ones decomposing naturally helping the soil become richer and provide homes for animals. With the Timberjacks tending to the different forest sections they've allowed for new growth and created space for animals to converge so they can hunt them. This biodiversity helps maintain a healthy environment, but it wouldn't be so healthy without the Whispering Death below. They munch on the fallen and decaying growth as they burrow through their tunnels. This mixes the soil, opening air passages and water flow to help the foliage. Foliage that the Timberjacks use for their nests. The clearings also provide the necessary rocks for the Whispering Deaths eggs. Don't you see the connection?"

"I get it without the Timberjacks maintaining the forest from above they would run out of prey and homes, but without the Whispering Deaths their homes wouldn't regrow at all. They depend on one another for survival!" Astrid explained.

"That is the coolest thing I have ever seen. No wonder your two packs can get along so well. I wish we had more time to see your symbiosis in action."

"Your group is welcomed to stay a few days exploring our island. We could use some help with keeping the populations down a bit so there's enough prey for all of us. We'd even let you gather materials for you to take on your journey," \_Alpha said.

"That's the best news I've heard all day."

Over the course of the next three days the questers explored the island learning all they could about its inhabitants. Fishlegs was kept very busy updating the Book of Dragons with new information. For instance he learned that Timberjacks would rub up against tree branches to scratch itches and that Whispering Deaths didn't like dragon nip. He also learned which rocks would keep a Boulder Class dragon healthy.

After some intense negotiating and promising to write a big warning label on the map Ula managed to get permission for them to gather supplies from the island. The Timberjacks cut down three enormous trees shaving them down into useable lumber. The twins helped tie them together to form rafts which the dragons would help float back to Berk for use. Thanks to the magic mirror the tribe would know not to attack them. Meanwhile, Snotlout and Astrid were busy mining precious metals from the caves with the help of the deaths. The amber would come in handy for making perfumes and spicing food. Hiccup and Nissa spent a lot of time restocking supplies for the journey while the dragons talked with one another about different survival strategies.

Toothless was especially anxious to find out if the two packs knew anything about his missing family. He talked with every dragon on the island until he found the oldest Timberjack who knew something. He got very excited and started asking a zillion questions until he was bobbed on the head by the elder male for being an impatient youngster.

\_"Sorry, its just its been so long I was starting to think I was the only Nightfury left. I love Hiccup with all my heart, but if there's a chance to be reunited with my family I do anything to be with them again."\_

\_ "I understand the need to be with your own pack. Your human riders are very special yet nothing can replace the need to be with your family. As I was saying fifteen years ago a pack of Nightfuries who'd been injured landed on the shores of the island. They were tired and exhausted after being knocked around by heavy winds. I was sent to tell them to go elsewhere except I took pity on them. I had never seen such a sad pack before. I told them they could spend a few days recovering their strength before moving on. When they were about to leave I was curious where they were going since they said it wasn't safe to return to their old territories with their opposites hanging around. The alpha mentioned there was an ancient sanctuary further northeast of here where they could live in peace. It was at least two weeks from here and they hoped to rest on other islands along the way. If your group keeps heading in that direction I'm sure you'll stumble across them soon enough."\_

\_ "Thank you for telling me this. Its a big help in finding my family on our quest."\_

\_ "Happy to help out a fellow dragon. Especially one who tamed the raging humans."\_

After a goodnight sleep the questers said there goodbyes to the two packs promising to visit again some day. With the new information the group headed further northeast hoping to find more clues to the whereabouts of Toothless's pack. As they flew off Hiccup finished adding the island to the map naming it the Isle of Whispering Timber. He wondered what the next part of their quest would bring.

### 3. Flower Power

The questers were uneasy and uncomfortable as they flew on. A freak storm had come out of nowhere catching them off guard. Sheets of freezing rain fell from the sky drenching them. The winds howled and tossed them about. The boom of thunderclaps scared the dragons as Toothless was doing his best to avoid lightning strikes to his tail fin. Hiccup was trying his best to fly as low as possible to avoid the strikes, but the crashing waves of the raging sea forced him to fly higher. The riders had pulled out their traveling cloaks to protect them from the elements, but it wasn't helping much.

"We need to get out of this storm and fast! I don't know how much longer we can survive in this weather!" Astrid shouted. She let out a shriek as a thunderclap boomed right next to her. Stormfly was scared diving down and releasing her tail spikes in all directions nearly striking the others. "Calm down Stormfly, it will be okay."

"Has anyone spotted a rock or an island that we can take shelter on?" Hiccup yelled back. He glanced over his shoulder at the rest of the group. The twins were struggling to keep in the air. Fishlegs and Meatlug were being tossed about. Snotlout was clutching Hookfang who was slightly aglow as he tried to light the way through the storm. Nissa and Ula kept switching positions back and forth trying to keep a protective shield over the group with little success. The Daypeaces were shivering in the rain and looking exhausted.

"Hiccup if we don't find shelter soon we're all going to get hypothermia. Worse our inner flame might be extinguished," \_Toothless said as he dodged another lightning strike.

"What's your inner fire?"

"I think what Toothless is referring to is the methane sack that helps produce their fire. If dragons get too wet or cold their sacks won't work as efficiently. They might even go out!" Fishlegs informed him as he was tossed around by the storm. Meatlug was already looking rather sluggish as her wings started to coat with ice.

"We spotted an island to the south of us about half a mile away! If we can stay in the skies just a bit longer we can reach it in twenty minutes," \_Barf called out as the Zippleback switched direction. The two-headed dragon flew against the wind breathing some fire to melt the ice forming on Meatlug's wings.

"The storm is less severe if we head south! I think we spotted a clear patch ahead!" Ruffnut shouted. She was struggling to stay in her saddle as her brother fought to direct their dragon. "Tuff and I are barely hanging on to our dragon! If we get any wetter we're going to fall off!"

"I don't want to take a salt water bath Hiccup!" Tuffnut added nearly falling out of his saddle only for his sister to grab him at the last second.

"The storm is growing in strength and intensity. It might develop into a full-blown hurricane at this rate. The island may be our only hope," \_Belch said.

"The Zippleback makes an excellent point. Everyone head south for the island. Hookfang, I know this is difficult, but you need to keep a lit to lead us towards the island. Nissa; stay near Hiccup and Toothless to protect them from the lightning. I'll bring up the rear. Hopefully my protection barrier will keep us safe from harm until we reach the island." \_

"Understood Ula. How are you holding up Toothless? This can't be an easy flight for you considering the lightning." \_

"I'll feel better once we're safely on the ground and under some cover. Ahhh, dodging all these strikes is not as easy as it seems. I'm more worried about both of us getting struck by lightning and the charge staying inside us. There's nothing in the air to ground the charge." \_

"With nothing to ground the charge it would stay in our bodies forever. I don't want to become a walking lightning bolt

bud."

"Don't worry Hiccup, I'll make sure the lightning doesn't hit either of you. Ugh I'm starting to hate living in these northern lands. At least back home the storms wouldn't be so wild and chilly! The sooner we get to the island the better. Its getting harder to maintain my inner dragon."\_

"Your not going to accidentally switch back to human are you?! Snotlout, how much farther until we reach the island? Nissa isn't doing to good over here."

"Yeah well achooo I'm not doing achooo so great up here achooo! I'm being burnt alive and chilled to bone achooo all at the same time. Our supplies are getting wet and I'm pretty sure achooo our food will be inedible achooo by the time we reach the island at this rate!"

"I can't maintain my fire much longer; I think our best chance is to make a break for the island at top speeds and hope we can outrun the storm. At the very least we can reach the clear patch in a matter of minutes. Work those wings dragons, we've survived worse then this before, though I can't think of one right now," \_Hookfang called out. With an extra burst of speed the dragons pushed themselves past their limits entering the clear patch. Well almost all of them.

Astrid and Stormfly had almost reached the clear patch when a sudden gust of wind spun them backwards. As Astrid tried to help Stormfly right herself a huge boom of thunder went off near her. The girl shrieked as she fell out of her saddle twisting her leg as she did. Stormfly started to dive after her only to have to pull up halfway because of the piercing hail tearing at her wing membrane.

Astrid hit the water hard, the air blown out of her lungs. She thought she heard something crack as the waves ripped off part of her top. She struggled to the surface kicking with her legs, but her right foot wasn't working that well. She broke through to the surface looking around desperately for the others. "Help ugh help me ah!" The waves shoved her back down into the ocean.

Astrid fought to get back the surface managing to take a gulp of fresh air before she was pounded again. The currents were pulling her out further away from the group. She was beginning to lose all hope when she saw a flash of pink swoop down and pick her up. Sputtering and coughing up water she smiled weakly at Ula. The female Honor Guard member tightened her grip on the girl making sure she didn't fall.

"Thank you for cough saving my cough life."

"I promised to keep you children safe did I not? No matter what happens I promised to return you all to Berk intact and I intend to keep that promise. We've enter the clear patch and the island is only a few minutes away. Nissa says she saw some caves we can take shelter in until the storm passes. We'll take a look at yours and Stormfly injuries in there. Try not to squirm so much alright?" \_

The group made landfall in the next few minutes gliding into the caves. As soon as they landed Ula ordered them to strip out of their wet clothes not caring that they see each other in the buff. They



needed to get out their wet clothes and dry up quickly. Meatlug and Hookfang quickly blocked up most of the entrance to keep the wind and rain out as Toothless set several rocks a blaze. Barf and Belch were working to get the ice off the dragons wings.

"If I wasn't shivering so badly I feel very embarrassed right about now," Fishlegs moaned as he tried to dry off with a one of their few non soaked towels. Most of their supplies were drenched. Ula was already separating everything into piles of what could be salvaged and what they needed to throw away. Thankfully the blankets had managed to stay dry miraculously. Nissa passed them around to everyone before taking the last two over to the dragons.

"Let's get you guys dry quickly. The sooner your dry the sooner you can warm yourselves up with your inner fire. Here we go, hold still that's a good boy. I know, I know your freezing, but hold on. Ugh we need to get these saddles off fast before the leather starts to mold on them."

Ruffnut and Tuffnut scurried over clenching their blanket tightly. Taking turns staying warm they managed to remove the saddles as fast as possible bringing them close to the fire to dry. Still shivering the teens managed to crawl close enough to look over their dragons for injuries. They all had some small gashes were the wind and hail had torn open their skin. Stormfly had some ripped membrane. Fishlegs found some healing paste Gothi had packed to use on the gashes while Ula used her blood to mend the rips in Stormfly's wings. They would take a few days to heal completely, but at least there was no scarring.

Hiccup was taking a look at Astrid leg. "I think you sprained your ankle when you fell. The swelling is making it hard to judge, but hopefully it will go down in a couple of days. How does your chest feel?"

"It feels as if its been sat on. Ugh, I think I might have cracked a rib when I hit the water."

"There's no way to tell that right now. We'll bandage it up and hope for the best. Ugh, how soon until our clothes are dry? I feel exposed."

"You are exposed, who knew that you were even punier underneath your clothes? Achoo!"

"Alright that's enough. I found some spare clothing that should be dry in a little while. Were all going to have to huddle close together to share warmth until then. The medical satchel made it through the storm mostly intact. I want each of you to chew on these herbs to help prevent catching a cold or worse pneumonia. We'll have to keep the fires going if we want to avoid a drastic drop in body temperature. There's not much I can do to help the dragons warm up, but hopefully their methane sacks refill quickly. I managed to salvage a few pieces of bread for dinner tonight. Hopefully the storm will blow over during the night; if not we're going to be stuck in this cave until it does."

"At least were dry and safe in here. Brrrrrrr when we decided to go on this quest I didn't think we'd end up like this. Maybe we should avoid telling the adults about this part of our quest huh?"

"We agree with Nissa. No one needs to get a lecture about the birds and bees because of this."

The group settle down for the night trying to stay warm as possible. As soon as their spare clothes were dry they quickly put them on to protect themselves. Everyone curled up around their dragon as the stones continued to warm them. Soon enough they were all asleep with only the whistling wind outside to indicate the storm was still going strong.

The storm raged on for another two days as the group stayed in their cave. They all were hungry and cold though none of them were willing to brave the storm for food. They caught some rain water to drink. The dragons recovered first doing their best to keep the humans from getting sick. It wasn't easy with their limited supplies. Much of their food had to be thrown out along with some rusted weapons and ruined torches. It was taking forever for the remainder of their supplies to dry out. To keep themselves from getting bored they sang songs and telling each other stories. At last on the third day the sun came out and they could leave their makeshift shelter.

"Finally, I thought we were going to be stuck in that cave forever. It was really starting to stink."

"Considering your pungent stench I'm surprised none of us passed out from it."

"I'm not that stinky!"

"We could all use a bath and our clothes could do with a wash. We should look around to see if there's a stream or lake we can use."

"We're going to strip naked again? No way I have enough memories of Tuffnut's butt to last me a lifetime."

"You're not such a pretty face yourself."

"Kinchin don't make me separate you two. We could all use a good soak, a hot bath would be just the thing to help us feel a hundred times better. Cousins, do you smell any freshwater sources nearby?"

"I'm smelling lots of flowers, prey, but no hang on I got it. There's a strong scent of freshwater not too far off from here. I'll fly over and check it out quickly," Meatlug said, taking flight and heading off. She returned a few minutes later reporting she had found a small pond not too far away. The questers made their way to the pond which had lots of plant growth around the edges. A small stream led out of the pond heading into the forest. "The water smells okay and I didn't detect anything harmful nearby. It should be okay to bath and do laundry in." \_

"There's not enough room for all of us to bathe at once. Maybe we should go hunting or look around for signs of danger while the rider's clean up," Stormfly suggested, wincing slightly. Her wing was still on the mend and she couldn't fly as long as the others.

"That sounds like a plan, but Stormfly you and Toothless will remain here to keep watch. Okay girls there's some privacy over behind those bushels for you to clean up with Stormfly. Toothless watch the boys here. I'm going to get started on the wash in the stream. Cousins don't take any risks okay? Just a quick survey and bring back enough for lunch."

For the second time in three days the kids found themselves stripping as they hurried into the water to get clean. Ruffnut and Nissa had to help ease in Astrid with her sprained ankle. Her ribs were feeling much better having only been bruised and not cracked from her impact with the water. Stormfly heated up the water to make it tolerable as the girls scrubbed clean and took turns helping one another with their hair. From behind their privacy curtain they could hear the boys trying to drown one another.

"Boys, they always have to make a fuss even when its just getting clean. I wish this pond had healing minerals like the hot springs back on Xanadu. That would have made us really clean. Ugh, my hair is such a mess."

"Your hair is nothing compared to mine. Its such a tangled mess I'm not sure how it hasn't become rat infested. Ye och! I thought this shampoo you made was suppose to make it easier to wash and comb our hair. Don't tug so hard Astrid!"

"I'm trying not to, but your hair is really brittle right now. That storm did a number on your hair. I'm shocked it didn't freeze chunks off. There its going through easier. I hope the boys remember to save some of the soap. We still have a ways to travel and its not like we have the tools to make more."

"We have some salts and could drain the meat for fat, but without lye to bind it there's nothing we can do. I hope Ula's finished washing our clothes. I don't want to wear anything that might have parasites in them."

"Are you girly girls done with your bathing yet? We finished awhile ago and Ula's making us go look for..." Tuffnut started to say as he came over to the girl side only for Stormfly to use her tail spikes to send him crashing backwards knocking over the other boys in the process. "Ugh, I think they're still getting ready."

"Why do girls spend so much time primping?"

"Its one of the many mysteries of life that men are never going to understand."

"Guys, why don't we let the girls get dressed in privacy? The dragons have returned with our meal and hopefully some good news."

The dragons had returned with some wild boar for lunch. The meat was savory and tasted good with the blossoms that Ula had found to add flavor. The skin was going to be tanned for use as a blanket or clothing material while they whittled away at the tusks for use as utensils. The teens were really picking up skills for self sufficiency.

"\_We didn't spot any trouble as we hunted, but the stench of a fear class dragon is heavy in the air and we don't mean the stupid two

headed idiot here." \_

\_ "Hey, we're not stupid!" \_

\_ "At least we don't complain over a little toothache!" \_

\_ "Can we please avoid insulting one another for one meal? Is that too much to ask for?" \_

\_ "Sorry." \_

\_ "You think there's a pack of Snaptrappers on the island? Four heads too many if you ask me. They truly are fearful with the way they can draw you in and gobble you up. We're going to have to be extra vigilant to avoid them. After such a heavy rainstorm you know they are going to be splashing around in the mud." \_

\_ "They could be molting right now losing their talons and scales. If that's the case then they won't be much of a threat." \_

"Don't you think we should make contact with them? Snaptrappers are difficult dragons, but they're not impossible to get along with. I'd like the chance to train one of them, maybe even ride one to see the difference between them and Toothless. They might also have information on Toothless's pack. Only how are we going to avoid being caught by their sweet scent?"

"Maybe we should wear our own fragrant necklace of flowers to prevent us from smelling the trap? I could try to use my Dragon Heart to connect with them, show them that we mean no harm and would like to study them."

"Good ideas, I've never encountered a Snaptrapper before so I'll be taking direction from our resident fear class dragon. Barf, Belch, when we encounter the dragon pack it's up to you to keep us safe understood?" The Zippleback nodded his two heads and the group got ready to meet with the Snaptrappers.

The group moved through the forest cautiously picking flowers as they went. The Twins weren't very happy to have to wear their flower necklace. Nissa and Ula kept reaching out with their Dragon Hearts trying to pinpoint the pack's location. The ground was extremely slick with mud making it harder to walk. The group was hesitant to fly knowing that the four heads had long prehensile tongues that could yank them out of the sky with relative ease.

"Ugh, can we please take to the sky? I didn't just take a bath to get muddy again," Snotlout complained.

"Are we even sure that there are Snaptrappers on this island? Maybe the dragons made a mistake," Fishlegs commented nervously looking around.

"I highly doubt the dragons would make a mistake. Their senses are much better than ours; if they say there's fear class dragons on the island then I'm going to believe them," Astrid informed the group.

"Then where are these dragons? Shouldn't we have seen or heard them by now? At the very least shouldn't we be smelling them?" Tuffnut

demanded.

"Everyone just try to calm down please. I know we're on edge right now however there's no reason to panic. If we just keep our heads I'm sure..."

"Hiccup be quiet!" Nissa snapped at him startling the boy. She had never raised her voice to him before. Nissa ignored the questioning looks as her eyes darted around. She was certain she had seen something moving in the trees. She strained her ears listening for any rustling. Something or someone was out there watching them and it was making her extremely uncomfortable. She could feel through her bond with Ula that the Honor Guard was sensing the same thing. "Something's stalking us, something big."

"Nissa's right, I've sensed eyes on us the whole time we've been out in the open. Whatever it is its very hungry," \_Toothless stated.

"We should form a defensive barrier with the humans inside the center or try flying out of the way. Whatever danger is out there we can outfly it no problem," \_Stormfly said confidently. She knew her wings still needed time to heal yet she refused to look weak in front of the group.

"I don't think that's a good idea, your wings need some more time to heal. If you start trying to do rapid and random flight movements to escape a pursuer you might tear open the wounds or be unable to fly ever again," \_ Meatlug pointed out.

Before anyone could refute her comment a sweet chocolatey scent entered their noses. The smell was overwhelming as it came from all directions. It was taking every ounce of will power not to follow the sweet fragrance into the shadows. The sound of crashing timber and the squelch of mud was deafening. They had to get out of there and fast.

"Take to the skies and fly as far away from the scent as you possibly can! Whatever you do don't let them lure you into a trap!" Ula commanded manifesting her dragon form. She spun around letting loose a blaze of yellow flames hoping to disperse the smell back to its source. The riders mounted their dragons and took off trying to get away from the scent ignoring the sounds they heard behind them.

The further they flew the stronger the scent seemed to get. There was no escaping it and they couldn't find the source of it anywhere. What was worse is the scent seemed to change to match each individual's favorite food. Their stomachs betrayed them by growling demanding food. The dragons were worse if the drool dripping down from their jaws was any indication.

"Don't get distracted by the false sense of hunger! We need to find some place that isn't covered with the scent of prey! We should head to the coast and go the long way back to our camp in order to confuse the Snaptrappers. I can sense them with my Dragon Heart getting closer. Are any of you listening to me?"\_

\_ "Can't ignore the smell of prey. Must go after it," \_Barf and Belch said in unison. The twins tried to control their dragon urging him to go the other way. He ignored them going lower and lower to the

ground. Toothless shot a plasma ball hoping to force the Zippleback to change direction when a very close roar startled the group. There was no time to react as they found themselves cloaked in a cloud of ordure.

The group was disoriented and frightened unable to find one another. They tried to fly out of the cloud only to end up back where they started. Barrages of fireballs and sneak attacks forced the group to the ground. When the cloud dissipated they found themselves stuck in the mud with hungry Snaptrappers licking their lips in anticipation of a meal.

\_"Its been so long since we feasted on humans" \_

\_ "They sure smell scrumptious." \_

\_ "Why are those other dragons hanging out with humans?" \_

\_ "Who knows and who cares?" \_

\_ "DEVOUR THE MEAL!" \_

\_ "Hey you can't have them all for yourself. The rest of us are hungry too!" \_

The Snaptrappers pack and all their heads started to argue and hiss attacking one another. It seemed that each head had its own desires and even when the pack worked together to capture dinner it could all fall apart if they started bickering. Bad for them, but good for the riders.

\_"Keep them off balance and subdue them quickly!" \_Barf instructed.

\_"Remember, a Snaptrapper is most dangerous when all four heads are working as one. If you can keep the heads apart the better chance you have of surviving this!" \_ Belch added.

"If you get cornered try throwing mud at them. They love playing in it!" Fishlegs reminded them Without hesitation the riders and their dragons launched themselves into the fray. It was total chaos as talons slashed, teeth ripped, a fire was thrown in all directions. Not to be outdone the humans were using their hatchets and knives to help defend their dragons.

Astrid was breathing heavily trying to ignore the pain in her chest as she tried to prevent her hatchet from being ripped out of her hand by the one of the head's prehensile tongue. The breath was enough to make her want to pass out. Stormfly head butted the dragon in the chest before unleashing her tail spikes. Two heads darted about chomping on the spikes as the remaining head blew a steady stream of fire at the Nadder. Stormfly beat her wings trying to blow the stream away only to get burned on the side. \_"AHHHHHHHHH!" \_

"STORMFLY! Now you've made me mad!" Astrid eyes filled with anger as she ripped her hatchet free and brought it down slashing off her attackers talons. "No one messes with my girl! Heyah!"

Snotlout and Fishlegs had tag teamed up to take care of three Snaptrappers at once. Meatlug ate as much mud as she could before

dumping it on top of the dragons. Hookfang all ablaze launched himself on top of the muddy dragons hardening the mud constricting his foes movements. Snotlout and Fishlegs pulled out some rope from their packs trying to lasso shut the heads mouth, but soon found themselves being whirled about in the air.

"I think I'm going to be sick!" Fishlegs moaned already looking a little green.

"Don't you even think about throwing up on me!"

"Stop messing around and get those mouths closed already!" Hookfang snarled. The Snaptrappers had torn themselves free of their hardened prison and were biting him on his back and wings. The Nightmare let out a roar tossing his head back and flipping the entire beast into the nearby woods. Not to be out done Meatlug was scratching gashes all over her foe.

The Twins were doing remarkably well as they worked in synch with their dragon. The Terror experts knew a thing or two about messing with people's heads. Tuffnut hurled insults at their foes making them blind with rage. Then Ruffnut would attack with her dagger causing some damage. Barf and Belch would then ignite their fire blowing up everything. The twin heads were also working swiveling around trying to tangle up the four heads.

"This is so much fun! I love beating up four heads at once!"

"Don't get to cocky sis, you don't want to end up in their mouth!"

"Four delicious heads, one for each of us! I'll take the girl!"

><em>

\_ "I get the boy!"\_

\_ "The smoky one is mine! I love extra crispy!"\_

\_ "Why do I have to eat the zapper?"\_

\_ "None of you heads will be eating us or our riders today!" \_

\_ "Yeah we'll show you how powerful a Fear Class can be when we have human help!" \_

Hiccup, Nissa, and Toothless were holding their own as they struggled to subdue their foe. Nissa was on Toothless's back using her mace to keep the mouths from closing in on them. The scents had really done a number to her body and she couldn't remanifest her dragon form. She was trying to reach out with her Dragon Heart to calm the pack down, but she was meeting resistance from one or more heads.

Toothless darted about using his speed to zip just out of range of the other dragons firing warning shots at them. Hiccup was telling him not to injure the Snaptrappers and give him a chance to talk to the beast, hopefully get him to calm down. As they dodged a tail strike Hiccup was starting to think this might be impossible. "I can't get the dragon to focus on me! There's too much confusion going on. Ugh taming Barf and Belch was so much easier."

"You had an eel on you and they were working together in a controlled environment remember? This pack is hungry from playing in the rain and mud for the past three days. Unless we can get all four heads concentrating on one thing and quenching their hunger there's no way I can connect with them. Do we have any food left to give them?"

"No, I'm out of bread and Toothless at the last of the scraps earlier. Where is Ula, she should be here helping us!"

"She's got her talons full trying to keep the rest of the pack from joining this little lollapalooza. Watch out! I think we need to jump onto that guy and try subduing each head individually. Toothless; can you get us in close and drop us on top of the beast?"

\_ "Try asking me to do something hard next time. Hold on!" \_  
Toothless climbed high into the sky before falling like a shooting star aimed straight at the Snaptrapper's body. The four heads opened their jaws wide waving their tongues about ready to eat their meal when Toothless banked just above their heads. Nissa and Hiccup jumped over his back landing on the necks as the Nightfury glided to a safe perch.

The two friends held on tight as the dragon attempted to dislodge them. Shimmying up the neck the ducked as other heads tried to bite them off. Refusing to give up Nissa was the first to reach the top of her head. "Shuu, stop fighting us. We're not your dinner we're your friends. We want to go for picnic with you Snaptrappers not be the main course. Shuuu, cousin; I'm not going to hurt you. It will be alright."

"Listen to her she's right. We just want to be friends. It can't be easy making friends when you have four heads disagreeing all the time. It's okay, we'll be your friends. You like playing in the mud? So do we? Vikings think a good mud bath is the best way to stay clean. That's right relax. I bet you've never had someone tell you how good you look after having a mud bath."

\_ "Are you trying to get us to reconsider eating you?" \_

\_ "Oh hush we've never had someone say we look good before." \_

\_ "That's because you are cross eyed dufus." \_

\_ "Hey, don't call him names!" \_

"That's enough out of all four of you! Your all part of the same body. You have to learn to get along if you want to survive. I know it can't be easy considering how even the best of friends disagree, but trust me. If a Daypeace and Nightfury can set aside their differences then why can't you four do the same?" Nissa commented. Her Dragon Heart was finally connecting as she brought all four friends into her mindscape. She showed them what the questers were doing and how much fun it would be if they all went fishing together or even played.

"We're not really so bad you know. I love dragons. I think there the coolest thing ever. You are one of the most fascinating species we've ever encountered. How would you like to help us update the Book of



Dragons. We'll even let you put talon prints in it." Hiccup added as he continued to stroke the heads. The Snaptrapper was purring in delight with all the attention he was getting. The heads enjoyed having their scales stroked and their tummy didn't feel so empty. With promise of food they decide they could work with the humans to catch the biggest lunch they ever had.

That was how Ula found the group thirty minutes later feasting on a mountinfull of boar and fruit seasoned with honey. Everyone was getting along drinking sweet juice from the fruit and swapping tales. It seemed that Hiccup's knack for dragons had really helped the group out again. She was glad that she didn't have to beat anymore Snaptrappers into submission.

"I must say I'm pleased to see everyone getting along. I'm wondering if we can learn from this experience and figure out how to avoid anymore wild encounters with other packs. It seems that every time we encounter a dragon pack they are upset with us."

\_"You came to our island unexpectedly and we haven't had a decent meal in days because of the storm. We love playing in the mud and bathing in the rain, but it does make it a lot harder for us to work cooperatively to secure food for all of us. Having four heads, but only one stomach doesn't make meal time any easier. We all want to munch on something delicious." \_

\_ "It helps though that Snaptrappers have adapted to being omnivorous instead of pure carnivores. You can survive harsher conditions then us because you can eat fruit and if need be leaves and shrubs. I bet those meadows of flowers are delicious," \_ Meatlug commented. She had tried the fish seasoned with some sage and lavender. It was okay, but she preferred her meat raw.

"The abundance of flora on this island is astonishing. I've never seen so many pretty flowers and grass before. Even the bushes smell heavenly. I've observed that you are recovering quickly from your injuries. Do the plants here have medicinal properties?"

\_"The plants here have many purposes besides seasoning and healing. We can use them to help alter our scent or kill prey by finding deadly ones. We use it to create building material for nests and some of it helps keeps out intruders. The possibilities are endless. Each of us have taken turns experimenting with the different plants to find out what there good for."\_

"If you would give us permission we'd like to take some bushels back with us. We could even transplant some of the seeds back on Berk to grow new food. I'm sure many of the woman would also love to make soap from the flowers. Even the grass here is good for helping bind building materials. The power of flowers is astonishing," Hiccup commented.

The pack talked among themselves for a little bit deciding what to do. In the end they agreed to help the Dragon Whisper, as they called Hiccup, with the identification and collecting of the plants. After a course, everyone had a good mud bath to clean up from the brawl.

They spent two more days on the island working with the Snaptrappers learning all about the uses of the plants. The fear class dragons

also enjoyed hearing about life on Berk from Barf and Belch who taught them how to keep their four heads in line during a crises. The Snaptrappers also revealed another clue to the Nightfury pack's location. Apparently another freak storm had blown the pack off course stranding them on the island. There had been a tussle, but a female Nightfury had cleverly used the flowers to hide her pack's scent so her pack could get the upper edge. The last they had seen them they had been returning to their original flight plan going further into the archipelago. It wasn't much, but it was helpful. Saying goodbye the riders headed off onto their next destination hoping they were getting closer to finding the missing Nightfuries.

#### 4. Changing Seasons

The questers had enjoyed a few days of peace and quiet after their adventures so far. The group had explored a few other islands without incidents. They had picked up more trinkets to take back to Berk. The map was coming along nicely as their understanding of their home and all its inhabitants was increased as they journeyed further into the archipelago. They hadn't uncovered anymore clues to the missing Nightfury pack. Toothless was beginning to wonder if they would ever find his missing family. Hiccup told him to keep his chin up and that they wouldn't give up until they found the Nightfury.

The group had stumbled across another island deciding to take a break. They hadn't seen or felt any danger, but that didn't mean they weren't keeping their guard up in case of danger. They had enough of being ambushed by dragons all the time. So while the dragons took the time to sunbath and the humans played tagged Ula kept watch. Something about the island was making her nervous, but she couldn't quite place her hand on it.

"Ula, come join us! We're having a lot of fun playing in the sun," Nissa pleaded with her Honor Guard.

"Nissa, I will relax when I feel that everything is under control. There is something going on here and I can't figure it out. I have a very uneasy feeling."

"Ula, I understand that we've come across a lot of dangers while on this quest yet were fine. Whatever dangers are out there I'm certain we can handle it no problem. Please, try to enjoy yourself at some point on this journey. Its not often we get to go on vacation."

"This isn't a vacation Princess!"

"I know that!"

"Hey are you two done arguing yet? We were wondering if you wanted to join us for lunch," Hiccup asked as he tried to defuse the tension between the two Daypeaces. "I know that your feeling really uneasy Ula, but Nissa is right. You need to relax at some point. Whatever is on this island we'll meet it with the usual confidence and gusto of a Viking tribe."

"Hiccup's right you know. You need to try and relax even if its for a little bit. If your on your guard all the time you'll burn out,"

Fishlegs reminded her gently. The others agreed and Ula conceded defeat as she settled down for an afternoon of peace and quite.

The group enjoyed their afternoon eating a hearty lunch and playing with one another. They listened as Nissa sang songs from her home and the kids even joined in for some dancing with one another. The dragons showed off their aerial tricks and even had a few friendly spars to see who was the best. Finally tuckered out the group settled down for a nice long refreshing nap.

As the group napped they were unaware of a few guests who had been observing them the entire time, two groups actually, both blissfully unaware of the others presence were deciding if it was safe enough to come out and get a closer look. Each group was hesitant to come out of hiding. Just because they couldn't see each didn't mean they weren't there.

Eventually the the first group decided to make a stealthy approach. The air seemed to shimmer as two large bodies detached themselves from their hiding places. They crawled across the ground careful not to disturb the slumbering humans. The dragons twitched clawing out in their sleep, but didn't wake. The two bodies were sniffing around searching for some food when they froze. Loud footfalls could be heard approaching the group and they sounded menacing. Turning around the shapes saw the approaching danger taking off into the air as clubs were thrown at them.

The noise awoke the questers as they tried to quickly figure out what was going on. Astrid and Snotlout went for their weapons only to be clubbed in the back of their heads. The Twins tried to tackle their attackers only to be shoved into the ground. Fishlegs ran for Meatlug ending up tripping over some rocks. Hiccup, Nissa, and Ula got ready to defend themselves only to be blinded by a dust storm. They were quickly tied up unable to escape. They could hear the dragons trying to help them only for the two indistinguishable shapes to fly down dragging the dragons off in the opposite direction as the others were hauled away like the captives they were.

The questers found themselves blindfolded and their legs and hands chained. Ula struggled attempting to manifest her inner dragon to escape except she couldn't. Something about her bonds were making it nearly impossible to access her dragon form. "Children are you okay?"

"Were fine ugh, but did anyone see what our captives looked like or better yet, understand what their saying? Ouch, stop that I'm not going anywhere," Fishlegs asked in fear. He was trying to be brave really he was. He pulled and pulled at his restraints trying to use his girth to break them to no avail.

"These guys better not have hurt Hookfang! If one spine of his is even remotely scarred I'm going to go berserk on these guys!"

"Where are our dragons? Why haven't they come to our rescue yet?" Ruffnut asked, nearly taking a tumble because she couldn't see where she was going.

"Barf and Belch would never abandon us! He'd come swooping down and biting anyone who threatened us," Tuffnut added. He was worried for his sister and kept trying to position himself in front of her only

to be yanked backwards. A club to the head made him see stars disorienting him even further. "Ugh, my head, I don't think I like seeing stars much."

"Does anyone have a plan of how to escape? Maybe we can overpower these guys and find our dragons."

"Right now we're in no position to attempt an escape. We should just wait and listen to what's going on around us. When the time is right we'll make our move."

"Nissa's right everyone. Lets remain calm and see if we can talk our way out of this situation. I just hope Toothless and the others are okay."

The group was marched single file up a hill, through a narrow pass and into a small underground grotto where they were tied up to some posts. Their blindfolds were removed and for the first time they saw their captives weren't human. Their captives had green grayish skin with thick muscles. They had glowing yellow eyes, slightly pointed ears and lots of hair on their heads in a rainbow of colors. They wore loose fitting clothes and were carrying clubs with intricate designs on them. There was only one thing their captives could be.

"Trolls! I knew trolls existed! I knew it!" Hiccup exclaimed excitedly.

"Don't sound so joyful right now please. We don't have a clue what they want with us or if we're going to make it through the night," Snotlout hissed.

"I demand to know the reason why you captured us and what you plan to do with us! I will not let you harm a single hair on the children under my care. If we have upset you in some way let us discuss this like civilized beings. I'm sure we can work something out."

The group parted as an elderly female with silvery hair wearing a purple robe approached the group. She carried an evergreen staff with a glowing blue gem on the top. She looked at each Viking carefully as if sizing them up. Her eyes focused on Hiccup for awhile before she locked her gaze on Ula. A wordless conversation seemed to go on between the two females. At last the spell was broken. The elder female started to speak in heavily accented Norse. "Greetings humans and draki. My name is Obsidian, I'm the Elder of our tribe of trolls. We don't get many visitors to Trollapolyze Island so your arrival was a bit unexpected."

"You can speak Norse?" Astrid asked in surprise.

"The language of humans is a difficult though not an impossible tongue to master. Several of the older generation have at least partial mastery of the language though the younger generation have difficulty understanding it. I apologize for the rough treatment you received in bringing you to our village, but we needed to assess if you were a threat to our kind. Especially since you brought dragons with you."

"What do our dragons have to do with anything? Where are they? Did your people take them somewhere else? If you hurt our

friends..."

"We have done nothing to your dragons, it was the Changwings whom we share this island with that have made off with your dragon friends. No doubt they have brought your friends back to their nests in order to recruit them for their attacks against us."

"Changwings? There a mystery class dragon that can perfectly blend into their surroundings and are extremely curious about the world around them. They glide more often then fly and they spit acid instead of fire. They don't grow as big as other dragons, but there still plenty dangerous."

"Thank you Fishlegs for that informative report, is there anything else useful you might want to add?"

"Guys, please don't fight right now."

"Excuse the children they get easily excited Elder Obsidian. Perhaps if you explain your grievances with the Changwings we'd better understand your situation and what you want from us."

"We trolls have lived on this island for many a generations. We are simple beings who enjoy humble lives. The men protect and defend us while cultivating music. Females learn the mystic arts and culture. Together we have created a utopia for our kind. Humans use to hunt us believing we stole things from them which is completely false. What need would we have for human socks or weapons? We can create our own clothes and weapons. The only reason to interact with humans would be to trade for magical supplies found on their islands or to gaze at the stars together."

"Your nocturnal aren't you? That's why you live in these caves with sparkles and usually on come out a night. Dusk was falling when you captured us," Hiccup reasoned.

"The sun does burn our skin quickly and hurts our eyes. Many a trolls have suffered burns as they try to find cover during the day. It is hard for us to maintain our gardens and fields with the sun out. Many of our people are forced to wear protective gear to work out in the open during the day. Especially since the relationships with the Changewings has deteriorated."

"Your magic isn't strong enough to protect you?" Nissa questioned.

"Our magic once strong has been greatly reduced especially since we began living with the Changewings three generations ago. They came to this island hoping to find a place of refuge. At first it seemed that we could live in harmony with one another. That the dragons wouldn't steal our crops or damage our homes. We shared the nights together in song and dance. We even attempted to learn to glide on them as you have learned to fly. It seemed that our two groups would finally find peace. Then all that changed about a year ago. There was an accident, a young female who had just gotten her magic glow unwittingly unleashed her magic across the island. The girl had yet to begin her formal training in the mystic arts. Her uncontrolled power injured a young hatchling who wings were damaged beyond healing. The Changewing would never be able to glide through the air."

"If it was an accident then why are you in hiding from the dragons? Didn't the dragons understand you didn't mean to harm their hatchling?"

"We tried to explain, but there was too much hurt on both sides. They demanded the death of the girl for what she had done. We refused knowing it was an accident. The relationships have deteriorated. The dragons would raid our homes and fields in turn we use our magic and weapons to harm them. Many have tried to broker peace, but every attempt at a truce has ended in more death. My people saw how you and your dragons got along. Humans who once slayed now ride with total trust in beings who could kill you in a single bite. We have also witnessed the transformation between the females into dragons. Surely such a gift can be used for peace between our fights."

"You want us to be your champions of peace? Sure no problem we can handle this right?"

"How do you propose we find a pack of dragons that can blend in with their surroundings so perfectly? Not to mention they have our dragons with them and who knows what they'll do to them if we try to get close enough to rescue them."

"Hey, no one said this would be easy, but this isn't a quest we can ignore. I say we go for it!"

"Yeah, let's knock some dragon skulls together!"

"Thank you, you may stay with us tonight and join us in our song and dance. Tomorrow we'll help prepare you for the task at hand. Unlock their chains and find our guests a comfortable place to rest. We feast in an hour!" Obsidian proclaimed. The trolls all cheered and started making music with their clubs. Bowls of food were laid out on tables as the Vikings were freed. It was hard to see with only the glowing crystals and a few torches.

"Is this supposed to be food? It sure doesn't taste like it. What is this a tree root? I need some real food."

"It would be wise not to insult our hosts' food selection. They may have released us for now however if we show them we're a threat we could be chained up again," Ula cautioned the children.

"Hiccup, do you really think you can broker a peace with the Changewings? From Obsidian's tale it seems they're pretty hostile. Trying to get close enough not to have acid sprayed in your face is going to be hard. Especially since they took the dragons hostage," Astrid commented.

"I know Astrid it's going to be tough without Toothless, but I think I can manage it. I haven't met a dragon yet I couldn't train. Sure I've had some problems in the past..."

"That's an understatement considering the first time you interacted with Hookfang he nearly fried you. What about Scaldrun nearly eating you when you tried to milk it for its venom? Or what about..."

"Okay Fishlegs we get it there have been a few problems in the past. I've learned from my mistakes and this time all of us working together will ensure that the trolls aren't bothered by the dragons

anymore."

"Then we can get our dragons back and off this crazy island. Dragons I can handle, trolls not so much."

"Don't be such a baby Tuffnut, we're going to be making history when we get back to Berk. Who knew Gobber was also right about trolls? Wonder what else he's right about?"

As the Vikings continued to talk about amongst each other Nissa remained silent. She had a nagging feeling that there was something more to the story than Obsidian was willing to admit. She was certain that a young troll had injured a Changewing hatchling and she was certain they had demanded restitution. She was equally cocksure that the fighting between the two sides had resulted in war between the two sides. Still there was something else to the story. She could feel it with her Dragon Heart. She reached out trying to connect with the trolls yet her efforts weren't rewarded. Bonding with trolls was a lot harder than bonding with humans.

"I wish I knew what they were hiding. Something tells me we're going to find out at the worst possible moment. Cousins; please be safe."

On the opposite of the island in a thicket the Changewings were doing their best to convince the dragons to join them in their fight against the trolls. They had imprisoned the dragons in a natural jail to keep them from escaping. The pack showed them their injured and talked about how their homes were destroyed by the trolls. They told horror stories of female trolls using their magic to enslave their kind for riding. Surely they understood what it meant to be slaves to others.

"We are not slaves to the humans! They are our loyal friends and riders. We work together in harmony to create a better future for both human and dragon kind," \_ Meatlug commented.

"They would lay down their lives for us no matter the danger. They have proven to be loyal, brave, and generous friends! When we were sick Hiccup risked his life to get us an antidote. The humans have done the best to include us in their traditions," \_Barf and Belch responded together.

"When I was falsely accused of causing a lightening storm my best friend stood up for me! He nearly died trying to convince his people that I wasn't the problem." \_

"How can you trust the human who made you incapable of flying? Humans have spent centuries killing our kind!"\_ Swiftwing, the leader of the pack, told them.

"We did the same to them! We've learned that peace is a better way of life than constantly fighting one another for food all the time. Our pack is on a quest to explore the islands in the archipelago to learn more about our home. To find treasures to make our island a better place to live."\_

"Dragons can't get along with any, but our own kind! The trolls have kidnapped your so called riders and our turning them against you. You can't trust anyone who uses magic. Look what they did to my

son Seasonscales," \_Swiftwing informed the dragons. He had his tail curled protectively around a small hatchling. The poor creature had one wing with scars all over it and the other was missing half of it. He was blind in one eye. \_"This is the damage magic causes! The elder's granddaughter decided it would be fun to see how big of a spell she could cast on a dragon and this is the result! The girl nearly killed my son and she wasn't even punished! She still is practicing magic and causing trouble! We have tried to find a way to form a truce, but they continue to attack us. They ruin our homes and make it impossible to raise our children in peace!" \_

\_ "Daddy maybe we should let them go. There's no reason to drag them into our conflict. I'm sure that Ruby is sorry for what happened." \_

\_ "Hush, I'll make a deal with you five. If you represent our interests in a meeting with the trolls tomorrow then we'll allow you to return to your humans. If you don't then you'll remain here and we'll make your lives miserable!" \_Swiftwing threatened. Before their eyes twenty Changewings materialized from their hiding place and started spraying acid. There could be hundreds out there. The dragons had no choice, but to agree with to their demands.

Nissa couldn't sleep that night as she struggled to find a comfortable spot on her lumpy mattress. She was sharing a bedroom with Astrid at one of the trolls domiciles. The female Viking was sleeping well with only the occasional snore. Outside she heard the trolls going about their nightly tasks trying to remain quiet as possible for their guests. Giving up on sleep the Daypeace rolled out of bed and pulled on a night jacket one their host had left out. She was determined to find out the answers to her questions tonight if possible.

Careful not to be spotted she made her way to the training grounds to observe a magical training session. She saw young females working in groups of five casting spells with beads. She noted that a small gem in their navel was the source of their magic. Most of the girls seemed to be getting the hang of the lesson which was to turn a rock into a gemstone, but she noted one girl in particular was having more trouble than most. A girl with red and silver hair was unable to turn the rocks into anything. Nissa also noted that the girl had strange blemishes on her arms as if something had happened to her.

"Come on Ruby you can do it! Its such an easy spell to master!" One of her friends with blue hair encouraged her.

"Just focus on the rock, say the spell and toss the bead! The spell will work if you believe in yourself!" A lavender hair one told her.

"Hurry up already, some of us want to go watch the stars tonight," a black haired girl whined only to be hushed by a blond hair girl.

"Stop pressuring me, this is harder then it looks! Okay here it goes; \_ taito rubio!" \_ Ruby shouted tossing her glowing bead on the rock. The bead splintered into red sparkles covering the rock. The rock in question shook and floated into the air before turning into a tomato. The other girls laughed as Ruby stomped away angrily. Nissa trailed the girl wanting to speak to her about the events of her



magic.

"Stupid spell, stupid magic! Why is this so difficult? I know I could do this so why can't I get it right? \_Taito rubio! Taito emeraldo! Taito crystala! Taito Onyxi! \_ Ugh why can't I get this right?!" Ruby shouted as she was surrounded by different vegetables.

"It seems to me that maybe your confidence isn't what it should be. I had the same problem awhile back," Nissa said making her presence known. "Don't be frightened, I didn't mean to startle you. I couldn't sleep so..."

"So you decided to spy on the worst magic caster in the tribe and make fun of me? Go ahead laugh like my so called friends. They mastered the gem transformation spells within a day of getting their glow, even ditzy Topaz. I'm the only one who hasn't mastered it yet and I'm suppose to be some big shot. My grandmother is the elder of the tribe. She doesn't need enchanted spell beads to cast spells, she can do it with just her gem."

"Hey, stop putting words into my mouth okay? I didn't come to make fun of you Ruby, I was honestly curious about trolls and their magic. We don't have anything like it on Xanadu. Berk is more interested in keeping the relationships between the dragons from getting out of hand then learning magic tricks. I do know what your going through. I was a late bloomer when it came to manifesting my inner dragon and I'm a princess."

"I guess your family was as disappointed in you as they were me. Most of the village blames me for our troubles with the Changewings because of what happened when I got my glow. I tried to fix Seasonscales wings really I did."

"I wanted to talk to you about that. Obsidian was pretty vague about what happened that day. All she said was that you unwittingly unleashed a magic spell across the island when your glow activated, but I sensed there was more to the story then that. Dragons are many things, but they don't go to war with tribes unless their forced or they have a good reason."

"Who can really understand the minds of reptiles? I'm sure the scaly beasts were just looking for an excuse to cause mischief. They enjoyed frightening us and playing pranks on us just because we couldn't see them. Their acid is also majorly yucky and disgusting," Ruby retorted with a bit more vigor then was necessary.

"You know Daypeaces enjoy the benefits of being both human and dragon. My friend Hiccup loves flying and free falling through the air. There's nothing quite like feeling the rush of air as the ground shoots up at you. One would think you could touch the sky if you wanted to. I also love being on the ground collecting sparkly gems and interesting rocks to add to my decor. I notice that you're wearing a pretty sandstone necklace. Did you make it all by yourself?"

"What are you getting at huh? What is it that you want from me?"

"My friends and I are going to be risking our lives tomorrow to help you're people make peace with the Changewings. If we don't succeed then we'll never see my cousins again. I want to know the truth about

what happened that day and all of it Ruby. The truth will set you and your people free. Now start talking."

At the Changewings nests the dragons had all gone to sleep except for Toothless. He was trying to figure a way out of their prison and back to their riders. His teeth and plasma balls did nothing to break the door to their cage door down. He was contemplating what do next when he heard the rustling of the bushes. In front of him the little injured Changewing appeared. \_"What do you want little one? Have you come to make demands of us as well?"\_

\_ "Shuu keep it down most of the guards are asleep. I came to talk to you Nightfury. My mama says Nightfuries are the wisest and strongest of the northern dragons. My dad thinks that you will make the trolls listen to our demands; force them to make restitution to us." \_

\_ "Would that be a bad thing little one? You'll never be able to glide with those wings. Don't you want amends to be made?"\_

\_ "But what if it was an accident? What if a mistake was made on both parts?"\_

\_ "Little one if you have something to confess I think you should tell me. I can't help you if you don't talk about what really happened that day Seasonscales." \_So the little one opened up and told the Nightfury what happened that day.

The next day everyone was extremely nervous about trying to broker a peace between the two warring groups. None of them besides Nissa and Hiccup had any experience with peace negotiations. They had to represent the best interests of the trolls while at the same time not angering the Changewings so they could get their dragons back. It was going to be tough and no one wanted to think of the consequences should they fail in their quest.

The peace summit was to take place in shady alcove not to far from the trolls underground home. The skies were cloudy so the trolls didn't have to come out with as much protection. Joining the group was Elder Obsidian, a few warrior trolls and spellcasters, and a last minute addition Ruby at Nissa's insistence. The young girl was nervously playing with her sandstone necklace nervously. She looked like she rather be anywhere, but here.

"Why did you want to bring Ruby with us? Don't you think seeing her will enrage the Changewings even more? They want her dead for what she did," Snotlout pointed out to Nissa.

"I don't always agree with him, but for once he's right. I'm sure you had your reasons for bringing her along and you have more experience then us with peace deals, but still are you sure about this?"

"Have a little faith in me please. I can assure you that Ruby's presence here is needed to ensure peace. All we have to do is wait for the right moment to use her."

"If your sure then we believe you."

"Anything to get our dragons back."

"So is anyone else concerned that we're meeting a whole pack of

Changewings that can blend perfectly into their environment? We could be walking into a trap! I'm positive I could spot maybe one or two, but what if there are dozens of them waiting to attack?"

"That is precisely why I'm going to be manifesting partially at the summit. If it looks like were about to be threatened then I'll change fully to defend you children. I don't want any of you to get involve in the fighting if you can avoid it. Let the trolls deal with their problems and get out of there quickly."

"Ula, that's not exactly the most honorable thing to do."

"Perhaps not Hiccup, but your father would kill me if you didn't return to Berk alive."

The thought made everyone shut up. After a few more minutes of walking they arrived in the shaded alcove. The warriors took up positions near a stone alter. Seats had been carved out from the natural rock. The teens sat down on the chairs along with Obsidian. Ula and the casters took up positions behind her with Ruby hiding in the back. The air was thick in tension as they waited for the Changewings to appear. They didn't have to wait long.

The air around them seem to shimmer as several Changewings made themselves known on the rocks and trees in the alcove. They heard the beating of the wings sounded the arrival of the leader of the pack. Everyone let out shouts of joy as they spotted their dragons coming down towards them. Toothless was being carried by Hookfang and Seasonscales was riding on his daddy's back. They all wanted to race over and hug them except that Swiftwing and his bodyguards let out a spray of acid keeping them in their seats. He growled angrily when he saw the humans.

\_"So you bring the enslavers to be your speakers? How like the trolls to manipulate others to do their bidding. Have you sunk so low you can't face me yourself Obsidian?"\_

\_ "Hey don't go insulting our riders! You're the one forcing us to speak on your behalf today in exchange for our freedom!" \_

\_ "Silence! How are we suppose to discuss restitutions if the humans can't understand a word we say?"\_

"We can understand you just fine, we speak Dragonese," Hiccup spoke up startling the leader. He hissed getting ready to shoot acid when a warning shot of magic forced him to calm down. "Everyone calm down please! We all want the same thing and if we work together I'm sure a peace can be reached."

"The young human is right Swiftwing, there is no need for senseless arguing. If we can come together we can still salvage the friendship we once fostered."

\_"You speak of friendship when you dare to bring the girl who wounded my son with you? Have you finally come to your senses and decide to let us kill her for what she has done?" \_

"No one said anything about me being killed!"

\_"Daddy please..."\_

Before things got out of hand Toothless fired a plasma ball while Hiccup ordered everyone to calm down. The warriors backed down an inch and casters lowered their hands. The Changewings stopped hissing. Sighing with relief the teens and their dragons tried to bring the summit back to its original purpose.

"Alright to restate the reason we're all here is because you allege that Ruby intentionally used her magic to injure your son Seasonscales while the trolls insist that it was an accident of her glow activating. You called for her death and the trolls refused offering to try and fix the wings. When that didn't work you started a war with one another. Changewings stealing food, damaging properties and making life difficult for everyone. In turn the trolls used their magic to ruin your hunts, weapons to injure and make it hard for you to live all in attempt to get you off the island."

\_"It was no accident! That girl was found within feet of my son, her gem was all aglow as her magic tore apart my son. She thought to enslave him as her personal servant!" \_

\_ "How can you be so sure of that Swiftwing? Did the girl make any previous threats? Had she ever harmed anyone in the past? Have any of the trolls before the conflict got out of hand force you to do anything you didn't want to do?"\_

\_ "They attempted to tame us so they could glide with us! That is an insult to your nature!"\_

"It was your kind who thought it would be a good idea to learn to work as one! With castors and warriors on top of dragons there were no threats that we couldn't deal with whether they be pirates, rogue dragons, or wolves!" a female caster shouted from the back. Others joined in shouting similar grievances. The Twins and Snotlout tried to calm them down while their dragons held the Changewings back.

"Please can we not try to act uncivilized. Both of your tribes have had difficulties in the past, but that doesn't mean you can't find peace. Look at us! We thought that dragons were heartless monsters who wanted to steal our livestock and burn our homes down. That they would kill us any chance they got," Astrid pointed out.

\_"In turn we thought the humans were unruly savages with no honor among them. That all a human understood was how to kill our kind and imprison us for entertainment. Both sides made assumptions about one another that weren't true." \_Stormfly responded to her riders words.

"We've learned that when you let go of your anger and forget everything you thought you knew that's when you can make a fresh start. I can't imagine my life if I didn't have Meatlug with me. I love her."

"Toothless is my best friend. I need him as much as he needs me. We may train dragons in order to make life on Berk easier, but we don't enslave them. We've learned to compromise and let them show us better ways to survive. We need both to survive right bud?"

\_"Hiccup is right, peace can happen when both sides listen to one

another. This island is big enough for both your pack and the trolls tribe. If you spent less time at war with one another and more time working together you could build a fantastic home for both groups." \_

"That is all we have wanted since your group came to Trollapolize. It has not been an easy adjustment period for either of our kind, but I truly believe to the bottom of my gem that we can work together to for a peace. Please can't we start over Swiftwing? My granddaughter is here today to apologize for what happened. This group of riders and dragons have agreed to help us find a way to coexist. Shouldn't we give them a chance to try?"

\_"Why should I accept any apology from your granddaughter? It would be nothing, but lies! I know what happened that day!" \_

\_ "No Swiftwing, I don't think you do. Your son has been keeping a secret which I think you need to hear, something that has been making him sick in more ways then one." \_

"Ruby, also has something she's been meaning to say. She was just to afraid to come out and tell her grandmother the truth. The guilt has been eating her up and causing her problems with her magic. Ruby, do you have something to say?" Nissa implored the young troll.

Ruby took a few steps forward and so did Seasonscales. Both faced their family members with scared expressions unsure what to say or do. Finally they both started talking at once confusing the group only for Obsidian to use her staff to call to order. Looking at her granddaughter she waited for her to speak.

"Seasonscales was trying to help me unlock my glow. I was impatient waiting to join the others in magic classes and I wanted to impress you. I remembered you saying something about certain rocks coated in amber would make powerful spellbeads. I hoped that if I found some and used them on my gem my power would unlock. Seasonscales knew were to find the rocks I needed and promised to help me form the beads in exchange for me casting a spell to fully mature his powers."

\_"I was tired of being the last one in the nest who couldn't glide. You were always saying that I was strong enough, that my mimicry was horrible. I thought that if I took a shortcut you'd be proud of me. We found the stones alright and I was super careful not to use to much acid to cause an explosion. We had just finished forming the beads when a pack of wolves came after us. We tried to get away, but they corned us." \_

"I tried to cast a spell, but I was so nervous I couldn't think. My gem still wasn't glowing. I begged Seasonscales to dissolve the beads hoping the magic inside would scare them away, but his acid also hit my arms. I was in so much pain my gem instinctively activated. The magic was to uncontrollable and with all the beads around it just went everywhere. I didn't mean to cause a panic on the island and when I tried to fix Seasonscales his dad showed up. He didn't want his dad to know he was taking a shortcut or that he'd left the nest unsupervised so he told me to get out of there."

\_"I tried to explain that I just was exploring the island and that I got lost. I said that Ruby was trying to help me with her magic, but it went wrong. Dad couldn't believe that considering who Ruby was

related to and that she wasn't suppose to be getting her glow for a few more days. He figured she lied and was practicing on me. I wanted to tell him the truth, but I got scared."\_

"I was also afraid of getting in trouble. I tried to fix the mess, but it just got bigger and bigger. Every time the groups met we tried ensure peace, but I think we just made things worse. We're both really sorry and accept our punishments. Please don't keep the riders from their dragon friends. Its too cruel."

\_"Son; I'm very disappointed in your behavior. You knew better then to try to mix acid and magic together or lie to me. I would have been furious still, but I wouldn't have banished you Your development was going along just fine you didn't need to be the best so quickly. I love you for who you are my son. Taking shortcuts and letting others take the blame is not a sign of a good leader. If we had known the whole story maybe we could have found a way to help heal your wings."\_

"Ruby, I'm also greatly disappointed with you. I taught you the value of honesty and patience. You never needed to be anything but yourself. Taking so many risks and then endangering the life of a hatchling was very irresponsible of you. What's worse is you tried to cover it up and look what happened. You need to own up to your mistakes and face the consequences no matter what they are."

"Yes grandma, I realize that now."

"I'm glad at least you finally told the truth. It couldn't have been easy. You'll be punished accordingly when we get home, but for now I think you owe everyone an apology and need to help make restitution for the war that was started."

\_"The same goes for you Seasonscales. We'll talk about this more when we get home, but for now lets try a way to fix what you two broke."

—

"I'm sorry for hurting you Seasonscales and I'm also sorry that I caused us to go to war."

\_"I'm sorry too for lying and sneaking out of the nest. I promise never to do that again."\_

"Apology accepted children. So, how are we going to resolve our differences? There is still much hurt to get over."

"Why not make restitution to both of you at the same time? You know have a huge party where all of you say sorry to one another and have a big feasts with dancing, music, and games?" Snotlout suggested.

"Yeah afterwards the trolls could help rebuild the nests and go on hunts together for food to restock. In turn you could help them farm their crops again and help restore the caves to their former glory," Fishlegs said.

"Maybe you guys could work together on creating spellbeads or weapons to foster bonds of friendship?" Ruffnut stated and her brother nodded in agreement.

"Are you willing to try to work as teams again? We'd be happy to give you a demonstration of how we work together in the air and on the ground. Toothless and I are pretty good teachers."

"All of those are good ideas for peace and cooperation. Still there is one more thing we can do to help fix your broken bonds. Ruby, I'll need your help for that. Come over here please, you too Seasonscales," Nissa said kindly. The two nervously approached her wondering what she had in mind. Nissa took a dagger pricking her finger and letting the drops of blood land on the scarred wings and his eye. She took a few scales from Seasonscales and place them on Ruby's arms. She looked up at Ruby who was holding a spellbead. "My blood can start the healing process, but only your magic can undo what happened to him. You need to have confidence in yourself, trust your magic to do what its suppose to. At the same time you need to let his scales help your wounds heal."

"What if I just make it worse? What if..."

"I trust you Ruby, I need to also stop thinking I don't deserve to be healed so my body can be fixed. If we believe hard enough my scales should fix your arms as well."

"You can do this, I believe in you."

"Okay if your sure. \_Restora scala via occularo!" \_ Her gem glowed brightly igniting the bead which she dropped on the hatchlings wings. The sparkles joined with the blood causing his scales to shimmer and change. As the lights vanished Seasonscales let out a roar of pleasure as his wings and eye were restored. At that moment the scales on Ruby's arms flashed before dissolving into her skin and repairing the damage. Ruby jumped up and down in joy that her spell had finally worked as the two groups looked at each other in joy.

That night everyone was celebrating in joy as the party got underway. Laughter and music could be heard as everyone dug into their food. The Changewings provide entertainment as they played Where's the Dragon with the youngsters. It seemed as if a new peace could be reached. Nissa decided to make sure of that. At the height of the festivities she cleared her throat to get everyone's attention. "Thank you everyone for coming here tonight. I know it has been a difficult year for all of you. Many of you fear that this truce will fall apart, that once again you'll be warring with one another. My friends have done their best to show you how former enemies can work together. To help dispel any further doubts I have a song I like to sing to remind everyone of the value of peace and friendship. I hope you like it; its called, "\_The Gift of a Friend" \_ Play it guys."

The teens started to play the music with the dragons acting as back up. Under the pseudo night sky Nissa swayed to the music enjoying the spotlight before opening her mouth and letting the words flow. Everyone leaned in to listen to her beautiful voice.

" Sometimes you think you'll be fine by yourself"

"Cause a dream is a wish that you make all alone"

"It's easy to feel like you don't need help"

\_But it's harder to walk on your own\_  
\_You'll change inside\_  
\_When you realize\_  
\_The world comes to life\_  
\_And everything's bright\_  
\_From beginning to end\_  
\_When you have a friend\_  
\_By your side\_  
\_That helps you to find\_  
\_The beauty you are\_  
\_When you open your heart\_  
\_And believe in\_  
\_The gift of a friend\_  
\_The gift of a friend\_  
\_Someone who knows when you're lost and you're scared\_  
\_There through the highs and the lows\_  
\_Someone to count on, someone who cares\_  
\_Beside you wherever you go\_  
\_You'll change inside\_  
\_When you realize\_  
\_The world comes to life\_  
\_And everything's bright\_  
\_From beginning to end\_  
\_When you have a friend\_  
\_By your side\_  
\_That helps you to find\_  
\_The beauty you are\_  
\_When you open your heart\_  
\_And believe in\_  
\_The gift of a friend\_



\_And when your hope crashes down\_  
\_Shattering to the ground\_  
\_You, you feel all alone\_  
\_When you don't know which way to go\_  
\_And there's no signs leading you home\_  
\_You're not alone\_  
\_The world comes to life\_  
\_And everything's bright\_  
\_From beginning to end\_  
\_When you have a friend\_  
\_By your side\_  
\_That helps you to find\_  
\_The beauty you are\_  
\_When you open your heart\_  
\_And believe in\_  
\_When you believe in\_  
\_When you believe in\_  
\_The gift of a friend"\_\_

Everyone clapped and cheered the young princess for her dynamite performance. Her friends also congratulated her on a job well done. Ula gave her a big hug also. Two days later the questers were ready to leave with new treasures to bring back. Obsidian had given each member of the party a gem necklace telling them they were enchanted with ancient power that would reveal itself in time. The Changewings provide the dragons with some rocks to chew on to keep their teeth healthy. Swiftwing was able to provide more information about the whereabouts of the missing Nightfury pack. He said that many years before the pack had taken up temporary residence on the island mining the magical stones saying they would need them to find a special island a few days journey from them. They had said the island was protected by strange magic and that their new home would be somewhere very safe. Toothless thanked them for the information. As they took off in search once more they were happy to know they had brought a little peace to island of new friends.

## 5. Unwelcomed Company

The questers had picked up the pace a little as they flew further northeast into the archipelago. They had only packed enough supplies to last them a month and they were expected back on Berk within a

week and half period of that. If they wanted to return in that time table they would need to start turning around by the end of the week regardless if they found Toothless's pack or not. Hiccup was not willing to give up until they exhausted every possibility of finding the pack. He owed it to Toothless for all the times he'd helped him. The problem was just locating the right island. There were so many how did one find the Mysterious Island that was home to a pack of Nightfuries?"

\_"Gold for your thoughts?"\_

"Huh, what was that Nissa?"

\_"You seem awfully distracted Hiccup. I know what's weighting on your mind and heart. I'm getting anxious as well. I want to find the Nighfury pack and make things right with them as well. My people are partially responsible for Toothless losing his family. Its hard to imagine going fifteen years never knowing the truth about what happened to people you love. Dragons are resilient creatures and their bonds with family members are different then those of humans. Our cousins all have different methods of raising their hatchlings and how much time they spend with them. They may even have special long term relationships with a few of their offspring, but the maturity of the time after a dragon reaches adult status they don't have much to do with their kids. Still a pack is a family depending on one another for survival. A lone dragon is much more vulnerable and likely to get hurt."\_

\_ "Nissa's right Hiccup. Even though it was torture to live under the Red Death rule I wasn't alone. We're not the most social creatures in the world, but having a friend by your side makes life a whole lot easier. I do wonder though if I'll fit in again with my kind. So much time has passed and I'm not a little juvenile anymore. I'm grown dragon who needs a human to fly." \_

"Don't worry bud, I'm positive that your family will be so happy to see you they won't care that you can't fly on your own. We just need to find them and soon. I'm worried Ula is going to make us turn around soon."

\_"It is her duty to keep us safe and alive. Even if you desire to find the Nightfury pack we must return to Berk to help with inventory and defense of the island." \_

The sounds of wings descending were heard as they watched Snotlout and Hookfang fly down towards them. The others were around the air in the standard formation. "Ula wanted to tell me she spotted an island up ahead. We're going to touch down and take stock of everything we've gathered so far. Then she's going to let us search for treasure for awhile! Isn't that the most awesome thing in the world?"

"Searching for treasure does sound a lot less dangerous then some of the things we've encountered on this quest so far. I would enjoy a simple search for gold and jewels then running for my life against an angry pack of dragons," Fishlegs responded as he flew back towards them.

\_"We have encountered so many different dragon packs its a wonder we haven't come across any strike class dragons yet." \_

\_ "Don't curse us Meatlug! The last thing we need to do is come across a Skrill! Those guys are nasty and I'm a Nightmare! They have the worst temper and love to slash and maul anyone who gets in their way! If we encountered any of them our best option is to fly far away as fast as we can."\_

\_ "I hate to agree with anything Hookfang has to say, but in this case he's right."\_

\_ "Come on you guys don't be so paranoid."\_

"Nissa's right, our luck can't be that bad that we come across a pack of Skrills. We could use a break from flying so long. If you're that worried we'll keep an eye out for trouble."

The island they landed on seemed normal though with a bit less foliage than the last one. Lots of the trees had scars from lightning strikes. The air smelled faintly of burnt ozone. They could hear sounds of animals in the distance, but at the moment everything was safe.

"Do you realize that we've flown almost fifty miles from Berk? This is further than any Viking has ever explored. I don't think even a Daypeace has found a Gateway that leads this far away yet. This map is coming along quiet nicely. See I've put in all the islands we've spotted, added in air and sea currents, and scaled everything perfectly. These maps are going to be extremely useful once we return to the island. I haven't had this much fun doing cartographer work in the longest while."

"That's great that your enjoying yourself so much Ula. It seems that this quest has proven to be a very profitable one. We've expanded our knowledge on the local flora, fauna, and dragons during our travel. Its amazing how many new animals and plant species we've come across. I could write a whole book on the uses of the plants we got from the Snaptrappers alone," Fishlegs gushed.

"The precious metals and timber we got from the Timberjacks and Whispering Deaths island should have restocked Berk's supplies for the months to come, maybe even given us a surplus," Astrid commented. "Can you imagine the shelters we can create for our dragons with that much timber and metal? Its going to be so great to be able to build more comfortable homes for the dragons both on Berk and Dragons Roost."

"These chewing rocks are great for keeping Barf and Belch's teeth nice and sharp."

"I wonder when we'll unlock the secret of these necklaces. I want do something magical."

"Just be patient a bit okay, I'm sure we'll figure out the secret soon enough you two."

"Yeah we've found a lot of cool things, but I'm ready to get to some serious treasure hunting! This island must have something of real value that we could take back. I'm not going to be happy until I find a chunk of gold the size of my head. I was promised treasure on this quest and I'm not leaving until I get some."

"You can't really expect that the island we landed on just happens to have gold and jewels on it can you?" Astrid said incredulously.

"Hey, I have a nose for treasure. I can literally smell the valuables here."

"Does your nose also tell you that your starting to stink up the place again? I thought your mom packed extra soap for a reason."

"Oh who asked you anyways Ruffnut!"

"Do we have to keep fighting? Honestly I'm beginning to wonder if my yellow attribute flame is starting to wear off because your not acting as smart as before."

"Everyone chill for a minute. Snotlout is right that it wouldn't be a proper Viking quest if we didn't search for some treasure. Now I'm not sure if this is the right kind of island to find gold and jewels, but it won't hurt to look around for some. I think it might even be fun to find some lost treasure. So where do you think we should start looking?"

Hookfang started digging in the dirt as Meatlug crunched on boulders. Stormfly used her tail to overturn some stumps and bushes while Barf and Belch sniffed around trying to scent treasures. The tales of dragons hoarding treasures had a grain of truth to it. Dragons liked sparkly things because they were fun to play with and they could see themselves in them. In many ways they were more enthusiastic then the humans about looking for treasure.

\_"This spot is as good as any to check out first. We can do a grid search checking each section of the island until we find something. How much time are we spending here anyways?" \_

"Tonight and tomorrow. Don't protest if you teens want more time then we won't be able to spend searching for the Nightfury pack before we turn back that's the way it has to be. I'm sorry if it seems unfair; however you all made a promise that you were going to search as long as possible to find Toothless family. We can still search for more treasure if you like on the return trip to Berk if you don't find anything alright? Good, now let's see what we can find here that will make Snotlout grin."

"Oh yeah this is going to be fun! Move over Hookfang I'm going to be the first to strike gold. Ah let me go you crazy dragon."

The group spent the next three hours searching in a grid pattern for any signs of treasure, but they didn't find anything of value. Just lots of dirt and tree roots. The dragons were starting to get discouraged and Snotlout was punching stuff while whining that he hadn't found anything worthy of his greatness. Nissa tried to keep their spirits up by singing songs about silver and gold hoping to placate the group. No one notice a small pair of eyes watching the group from a nearby tree listening to their conversation.

Human and dragons on our island how hot is that! Those two females are Daypeaces wow I never thought I see one in my life! Oh I want to join them yes I do! How do I get them to accept me in their pack?

Hmm, I know they keep talking about finding shiny objects to take back to their home so why don't I show them the way to the shiny cave! There's enough glittery objects in there that I bet the others won't care if this pack takes a few items. I better go get some to leave a trail for them right now. With that thought the little pair of eyes vanished.

Night came quicker then the group expected forcing them to abandon their search for treasure early. This didn't improve the mood at camp. Snotlout and the Twins were all unhappy they hadn't found anything and Fishlegs was complaining about his sore back. The other teens tried to cheer them up while the dragons argued among themselves were they should search in the morning. Needless to say everyone was cranky as they turned in for the night.

No one heard a small visitor just outside the perimeter of the camp dragging something heavy with them. The little visitor was struggling with its prize as it struggled to pull the item close enough to the camp. After taking a few tumbles the little one was satisfied with its work before heading back to start dragging a smaller shiny to another spot. It was all a game to the little one who kept its ears and eyes open for trouble.

The questers were all awoken suddenly by the shouts of joy followed by a roar as they stumbled out of their tent. Snotlout and Hookfang were dancing around as they tossed a large gold lump back and forth. "Look what we found this morning when we went to answer the call of nature! It was just lying out in the open. It must be at least 14 karats! Its all ours right buddy?"

\_"We'll divide it half and half! I'm going to use my half to make my nest look better. A male dragon can attract more females if his nest is super decorative don't you know?" \_

\_ "You don't find it strange that a shiny was just lying around? We searched all afternoon and didn't find anything. Now you two just stumble across something of value? Sounds like a trap to me." \_

\_ "Shut it Toothless, just because your jealous I found a shiny before you doesn't mean you can ruin my fun!" \_

\_ "You think I'm jealous? That's insane!" \_

\_ "Hey, there's even more shinnies through the trees! Maybe some winds blew through last night uncovering them. Oh look at this one its dazzling." \_

\_ "I think it looks great with our complexion. Tuff, Ruff hurry up! I thought you two wanted to find something to claim as your own."

\_

"Yeah, I'm going to find something to make an armband out of! Tuff can find something to use to keep his pants up better."

"Stop joking about that already. What's the matter slowpokes aren't you coming?" The Twins took off on their dragon along with Snotlout. The others had no choice, but to follow. It was highly suspicious that they had been searching for treasure and now it had appeared. It made them wonder if something or someone was on the island waiting for them. Still it would be a shame to let all the valuables go to

waste.

They followed the trail of gold lumps, a few silver coins, and at least one shiny ruby. As they made their way through the burnt treeline they failed to notice something small following them through the trees with a glint of joy in its eyes. The small creature was smiling thinking how clever it was to make this trail and lead the pack to their quarry. This game was much nicer and safer than all the rough housing its siblings liked!

The Vikings came across a small cave that had scratch marks all over the entrance. Some of them looked fresh. The dragons stilled wary as they picked up the faint smell of a dragon pack. The smell of ozone was making it difficult to tell exactly what dragon species was there.

"I'm starting to wonder if coming here was a good idea. Maybe we should turn back before something bad happens," Hiccup said cautiously.

"Don't be such a wimp, we've come this far. It would be stupid not to follow the trail inside. There could be a ton of treasure just waiting for us."

"What if there's an angry dragon pack waiting inside to fry us? What then Snotlout?"

"I'm not sensing any other dragons in this vicinity Hiccup. I share your concerns about entering the cave yet someone wants us to go in there. I intend to find out who that someone is. Stay alert everyone we need to be ready to make a quick escape," Ula warned as they went inside. Inside the cavern they were greeted by a glorious sight. There was more gold, jewels, and artifacts than they had ever seen in their life. It was a trove of treasure.

"Unbelievable, how could there be this much treasure in one place? This has to be someone's hoard."

"Well now it's ours!"

"Yipee! You found the shiny cave! I knew you could find the shiny cave if I left a trail! This was a fun game to play!" \_ a small female voice squeaked. They looked up to see a small hatchling, probably about a year old, sitting on one of the piles of treasure. She slid down off the mound presenting them each with one small trinket jumping around happily. The entire group stilled as they saw what kind of dragon she was. \_ "My name is Lumina! I'm a Skrill and can I join your pack?" \_

\_ "I knew it was too good to be true, we need to get off this island and pronto before her parents show up!" \_Hookfang shouted.

"I agree with my dragon, let's take what we have and fly quickly."

"You can't be serious about taking anything off this island. Those Skrills have been hoarding this stuff for years. They're smart enough to realize that some of their treasure will be missing and then they'll be pursuing us to get it back!"

"I like treasure, but not at the cost of my life."

"We agree with Fishlegs. Our own destruction isn't a show worth watching."

"Um I hate to interrupt this conversation, but shouldn't we be addressing the hatchling in the room and her question?" They all looked at the yare hatchling who was bouncing around with a bemused expression on her face. They finally got a good look at her and realized she was different then other dragons they had met. For one she was smaller then most hatchlings only a little bit bigger then a Terror. Also her coloring was off, her scales were lighter and she seemed to be missing some of her color. It suggested that she suffered from axanthism; a form of albinism in reptiles that meant certain colors were reduced or missing in a reptiles scales. Her temperament was vastly different then the average Skrill seeing as how she acted more like a puppy then a dragon.

Hiccup leaned down and held out his hand for the little girl to sniff. She smiled rubbing against his hand purring in delight. She rolled on her belly letting him scratch her. "Your name is Lumina right? You not what we were expecting for a Skrill."

"You're not like any human I ever heard about. Mommy was always telling me humans were to stupid to talk properly and that they were blood thirsty monsters that needed to be swallowed. Daddy says that we take their shinnies because they don't deserve them; that only the Skrills are worthy to own this stuff. I don't think your stupid or monsters! You're so dragon like! Plus you have some of the strongest and coolest dragons in your pack!"

"Well we are cool so cool we're hot! Ha see we just made a joke!"

"Hilarious you two, though I think we have a bigger issue. This little one is going to get us in a heap of trouble for scattering the treasure around for us to find. I'll bet my tail spikes the girl's entire pack is making their way to slaughter us."

"Stormfly you don't have to chastise the poor little thing. She was just playing a game."

"A game that could get us killed Meatlug!"

"Both of you stop it right now! If we lose our heads now then we can't save them later," Toothless growled as he threatened to fire a plasma ball. Ignoring the scathing looks he gently picked up the hatchling in his mouth setting her down in the middle of the dragon circle giving her a pointed look. "Lumina, why did you leave us a trail of shinnies and give us some of it? You had to know your pack would be very displeased by your actions."

"I don't understand its just a game right? I was playing around seeing if you could find the shinnies and then you did so I gave you a prize. There so much treasure here the pack won't miss a few pieces right? I mean they have a ton of other stuff to roll around in."

"Lumina, I understand that you were playing a game, but your actions have serious consequences. This is your pack's treasure hoard. It

would be wrong of us to take anything without permission nor should you give any of it away without consulting them," Ula explained kindly to the little one who looked down saddened. "Tell me little one, why do you want to join our pack? Aren't you happy with your own?"

\_"Everyone treats me differently just because I'm smaller and have weird coloring. The sun also hurts my eyes so I can't play outside often with my siblings. My mommy says I talk to much that's only because I have to entertain myself when I'm all alone. Daddy wishes I was more intimidating and fierce. He's got all my brothers and sisters shooting lightning blasts, clawing up prey and doing whatever it takes to win a fight. I prefer helping patch up the wounds or listening to the elders stories. I was always hoping one day I could find someone to be my friend and then you showed up! You seem much nicer then my family. I heard you talking about your home island, Berk?, it sounds like a super fun place to live."\_

"Lumina, we can't just take you from you home and family. Your a hatchling, not even a juvenile yet. You belong with them. If we let you come with us don't you think your family will come after you and force you back here? I know your unhappy now, but believe me things will get better. You just need to be patient."

"Ula, I know your trying to be positive and the grown up here, but even I can tell you Lumina is going to stay miserable. She's just too different then the rest of the Skrills. Do you really think she has a future here? She doesn't have any friends, her family isn't teaching her how to survive and she's never going to attract a mate at this rate. I know that look in her eyes, if we don't take her with us she'll just try flying off the island by herself into trouble. At least with us she has a chance of survival."

"Princess, her situation is..."

"I know its not exactly like mine though its similar. Aunt Rayna let me come back here because she knew I'd be happier here then on Xanadu for a time. Lumina knows what she wants. Don't dismiss her hopes and dreams just because of her age. She could have a lot of friends on Berk. I know the Terrors would love to have a playmate her size."

"Then who would be responsible for her Princess, you? You have enough responsibilities right now, caring for a hatchling would take up to much of your time. Besides, she'll need a human to bond with in order to have a rider."

\_"A rider? You mean I get my very own human who will be my friend and play with me? When I get big enough I can take them flying and protect them from harm? Yippee! I want a girl for my trainer and someone who has the same interest as me. You know helping out people, listening to stories, playing. You have anyone like that?" \_

"I say we give her to Gothi, she needs the help with old age," Ruffnut suggested.

"Gothi? The mute elder of our village? Lumina couldn't be more different then her," Fishlegs pointed out.

"So there opposites. They could compliment each other by covering the



others weakness. Besides if anyone can train this rambunctious little one its her," Tuffnut replied.

"Whoa we still haven't decided if she's coming with us. We're already stretching our supplies, we don't have enough for one more mouth. If she comes she'll have to earn her keep."

"She's not joining our..."

"Ula, I think your outvoted. Besides Nissa right even if we say no she's just going to follow us. We should just take her with us. Lumina; if you join us you won't see your family for a long time, maybe never. Is that what you really want?" Hiccup asked her.

"It may be hard at first, but if I can have a life of happiness I'll take it! I'll go say my goodbyes and then we can leave. I just need to find my favorite shiny to take with me and I'll be ready to leave." \_

"Your not going anywhere little one except back home for a beating!" \_ A large female voice growled. Everyone's hair stood on ends as the air become electrically charged. Burst of hot lighting scorched the earth near the humans as the dragons tried to shield them. From a hole in the top of the cavern flew in at least a dozen adult Skrills as the entrance behind them was guarded by hatchlings and juveniles. Everyone of the dragons looked angry and were slashing and hissing at the intruders. Lumina shrank into Toothless as the largest adults narrowed their eyes on her. She whimpered in fear as Toothless growled back at the other Strike class dragon.

"This is bad, very bad."

"Lumina, how dare you disgrace our kind by taking up with these lesser dragons and those disgusting humans? What's worse is you betrayed us by leading these outsiders to our treasure trove. Were you really going to give them some of it?" \_Striker, her father demanded.

"I...I...I... I didn't see any harm with giving them a few small pieces. We have so much to share. What's a few small coins and jewels?" \_

"The point child is that all this belongs to us and no one else! You really are a pathetic Skrill, you can't even bloody up intruders. After we dispose of these interlopers your going to get such a beating you won't think about leaving the nest until your an adult!" \_Electra, her mother hissed.

"What kind of parents are you to threaten this small one? If you dare lay a claw on her I'll rip you to shreds!" \_Toothless threatened. He flicked his ear at Hiccup who started edging towards him as he signaled the others to slowly move towards their dragons. "We don't want any of your treasures, just safe passage off this island. We'll never bother you again I promise." \_

"No, we'll make sure of that! KILL THEM ALL! The one who brings me Lumina will get to take some of this treasure for themselves!" \_Striker shouted. The Skrills let loose a roar before attacking with their rage. The cave echoed their anger as they fired a blast of pure energy towards the circle of riders.

Hookfang and Stormfly took up a defensive posture using their signature attacks to block the lightning blasts. Barf and Belch butted heads with the younger generation while Meatlug belly flopped on a couple others taking them down. Hiccup jumped on top of Toothless taking to the air to help fight the other Skrills. Ula and Nissa manifested their dragon forms trying to clear a path for their escape while the remaining teens used their weapons to counter the sharp talons and pointy teeth.

"This is not what I expected when we came in search of treasure! How can, ugh, these guys get so out of bent, watch it! Over a couple pieces of gold?" Snotlout shouted as managed to shave part of a talon off his attacker. He rolled underneath another Skrill twisting around to deflect the tail swipe of another before jumping straight up to avoid being eaten. As more Skrills drew closer he picked up a few pieces of treasure flinging it at them bruising their eyes causing them to howl in pain. "Hey, they don't like it when you hit them in the eyes!"

"Skrills have a highly developed sight that they rely on to find their prey! If you can take them out and another sensory unit so they can't track us!" Fishlegs shouted as he bravely fought off four Skrills at once. His sword clashed as he darted in and out ignoring the blood oozing down his arms. He used his bulk to his advantage shoving large mounds of treasure onto them burying them under its weight. "Guys, they're clumsier on the ground! See if you can keep them from getting into the air! Ah take that you overgrown lizard!"

Ruffnut and Tuffnut fought back to back using only a hatchet and shield between them. Ruffnut defended with the shield while her brother hacked away with the hatchet managing to break a few horns of the Skrills noses. Seeing their foes were about to shoot them with lightning Tuffnut grabbed his sister pulling her behind a outcropping of rocks at the last second to avoid being killed.

"Thanks brother."

"Don't mention it. Barf! Belch! We could use a little help here!"

"Kinda of busy at the moment!" \_Barf called out as he bit down on the mouth of an approaching Skrill. Its inner fire exploded inside sending the creature soaring through the cave opening and far away. He didn't see the approaching talons of the on coming attack, but Belch did so he sparked the talons forcing the beast to land to tend to its wounds. \_"Your welcome for the save."\_

\_ "Thanks; let's get to our riders they need help." \_

Astrid was sweating profusely as she battle her way towards Stormfly. Her Deadly Nader was using her super hot fire to keep melt some of the treasure while trapping the Skrills in the molten mess. "Stormfly, fire everything you have at them, no holding back!"

"You don't have to tell me twice Astrid. Come on you overgrown lightning bolts you want a taste of me? Your going to regret trying to fry me! You like those spikes, well here's a few more. Get on board Astrid quick, you'll be safer on me." \_

"Thanks girl, your the best."

Hiccup and Toothless used their amazing speed to dodge Striker and Electra's attacks. Hiccup had given up reasoning with the adults after nearly falling off Toothless when he dove to avoid being torn open by Electra's talons and Striker's tail. Toothless growled at his fellow Strike class dragon as he fired a series of plasma balls managing to hit his targets at least twice. \_"Whose the dragon now huh? I am!"\_

\_ "I will not be outclassed by a whelp of a Nightfury! You're not the best dragon species by far your the worst!" \_Striker hissed coming in fast towards Toothless's tail to rip it to shreds. Seeing this Hiccup dove on top of the tail to protect it earning a deep gash to his back.

"AHHHHHHHHHHH!"

\_ "HICCUP! You'll pay for that ahhhhh!" \_

\_ "Hurts huh? I wonder how much it will hurt if I squeeze a bit harder to rip you open," \_Electra chortled as she wrapped her talons around the Nightfury's mid section cutting deep gashes into his body. Toothless bulked about tossing her off. Twisting around he bit down deep into her wing tearing a chunk off causing her to crash.

Infuriated at the sight of his downed mate Striker engaged Toothless in mid air combat as they both fought with tooth, claw, and tails literally trying to kill one another. All Hiccup could do was hold on tight while avoiding being cut open further. He dug his knife out not believing that he was ready to attack a dragon in order to survive.

\_ "You and your entire pack will die!" \_

\_ "Not today you monster! I will not let you harm my charges!" \_Ula screamed as she headbutted Striker in the chest with her horns gorging him. The Honor Guard member was using her flexibility and agility to her advantage as she quickly twisted or bent out of the way of the Skrills attack range while delivering devastating blows with her own tail and fire. She had the greater endurance being able to stay in the air longer as Striker was tiring out from his furious succession of attacks. \_"I don't wish to harm you cousin. Please stop your attack and let us settle this peacefully. We have no wish to take what isn't ours. See the truth for yourself." \_ Ula sprayed him with her green knowledge flame informing him of their reasons for being on his island. She reached out with her Dragon Heart trying to connect with Strike to sooth his anger from the inside.

Striker shook her off letting loose his white hot fire which she countered with her yellow attribute changing flame reducing its power greatly. Ula flew circles around him as Toothless and Hiccup backed her up trying to pin down the alpha male in hopes of trapping him on a ledge or something. Ula tried to line up a shot to mist him with blue fire except he was way to fast for her. She let out a cry of pain as his talons slashed her legs and she felt his teeth sink into her tail.

\_ "Get off of her you creep!" \_Toothless bellowed as he sank his on teeth into the Skrills neck drawing blood. Hiccup in anger actually tried to stab the beast. Ula managed to use her tail blade to hit her attacker in the face forcing him to let her go. Toothless fired a few more blasts of plasma forcing Striker to fall back. \_ "We need to get out of here and off this island now! I don't think they'll pursue us if we can put a good deal of distance among us." \_

\_ "Agreed; though we should still try to weaken as many as we can to make pursuit not worth it. Everyone's managed to get on their dragon. As soon as the way is clear we'll get out of here. Princess Nissa, have you managed to clear a path?" \_

\_ "Almost got it hold on a second!" \_Nissa called out as she misted a few more Skrills. She ducked under an attack and then slashed with her claws. Spotting a trio trying to harm little Lumina she hit them with the full blast of her purple fire thanking her luck that the three were of different genders. A sexual brawl broke out as the males starting fighting over the affections of the female abandoning their attack. Nissa hurried over to the little one kneeling so she could hop on her back. \_ "Are you alright little one?" \_

\_ "Yes...sniff...I can't believe... that Mommy and Daddy...would try... to hurt me... like that. They don't love me whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!" \_

\_ "Lumina, you need to be a big girl right now. You can cry later right now we need to escape!" \_ Nissa ordered the little girl as she took care of the last of the guards blocking the cave entrance. \_ "Everyone the entrance is cleared lets go now!" \_ The questers didn't need to be told twice as they all flew out of the entrance escaping as fast as they could with the majority of the pack chasing them to prevent it.

The entire island became a canape of sounds as the islands inhabitants scattered to avoid being drawn into the fighting between the Skrills and the escaping riders. The zephyrean breezes had turned into deadly windstorms as the Berk dragons used every trick they knew to fly as fast as they could to get off the island. The riders kept their heads down as trees exploded from white hot lightning bolts. The dragons were trying to keep their tails from getting sliced off as their pursuers tried to slash them.

"Hookfang, can you create a fire barrier to slow down our pursuers?" Snotlout demanded. The tough Viking teen was sweating a storm and his heart was pounding. He had never been this frightened before not even when Berk was at war with dragons. These Skrills were some kind of monster.

Hookfang gave a grunt of acknowledgment as he became ablaze. He flipped on his side flying low to the ground. The dry trees became instant kindling. The ground was superheated melting or exploding forcing several of the Skrills to fall back. The questers couldn't relax as several Skrill flew straight through the blaze ignoring their burned scales and the immeasurable pain.

\_ "Doesn't this pack ever give up? They can't be this mad over a few pieces of treasure being misplaced!" \_Stormfly shouted releasing a barrage of poisoned spikes caging up the smaller hatchlings who'd been trailing them. She didn't want to kill the next generation in

order to avoid a bloody feud between the people of Berk and the Skrill pack. Stormfly was astonished to see the hatchling actually trying to chew through her spikes to get at them. \_"Tenacious little things aren't they?"\_

\_ "They wouldn't be Strike class dragons if they weren't super intelligent and speedy! Ah at this rate we'll never reach the coastline. We should try to fly up and out." \_

\_ "Not a good idea considering they have the advantage in the sky. In the open air we're much bigger targets and they'll out fly us in an instant. At least here in the thickness of the trees we can slow them down a bit."\_

"Why won't they give up already? Is anyone carrying a piece of treasure on them?"

"None of us have anything on us Hiccup really!"

"We made sure to drop it all once the fighting started. Unless something got stuck in our boots there's no reason for them to ahhhhhhhhh!"

"Ruffnut!"

"Meatlug lava blast now!"

\_ "As you wish Fishlegs! Eat molten rock you big bullies!" \_ The female Gronkle scooped up the burning dirt upchucking it all over the Skrills. Three of the senior members of the pack crash landed in the ground not moving. Fishlegs reached into his travel satchel picking up a bolo. Whirling it around his head he tossed it with all his might tying up another Skrill. He could feel a berzerker rage building up inside him, but now wasn't the time to get lost in rage. "How much longer until we reach the coast?"

"Another ten minutes, fifteen if they watch out!" Astrid shouted pulling her dragon into a steep climb as two Skrills came tearing down at her from the sky. Ula flew past them letting loose a powerful orange flame trapping the two in a sphere. Letting loose a roar she spun around heading back towards the pack meeting the charge head on. It was a clash of powers as the Daypeace tapped into her inner animal. It seemed Striker and a recovered Electra were leading the charge as the three of them started fighting to the death.

\_ "Ula stop! Run away please! You can't take both of them at the same time!" \_

\_ "Princess, don't come any closer! I order you to escape with your friends now! Don't let them pursue you back to Berk, lead them astray before returning to the original course!" \_

\_ "I'm not leaving you behind!" \_

\_ "GO!" \_Ula blasted her princess with fire before bending backwards to avoid the talons of Electra only to be sliced open from Striker's teeth. The adult Daypeace raked her talons and hit them repeatedly with her tail as she tried to escape her perilous situation. Her body was starting to revert back to human. If she lost her wings at this height she surely be killed.

On Nissa's back Lumina watched in horror at her parents ripping into the Daypeace. The sight sickened her worse then when her parents would bring live prey back only to slaughter it while devouring their meal. She knew that this was no longer about her leading the foreigners to the treasure hoard. Her pack wanted to spill blood because they could. That made her very angry. If her parents wanted to kill innocents for fun then she didn't want to be part of this pack anymore.

Ignoring Nissa's calls to come back the little Skrill rocketed into the sky at an incredible speed. Her eyes locked on her target she let loose a blast of lightning right into her parents face blinding them for a few minutes. With them blinded slashed her talons cutting into their thick hides. She landed on her mom's head sinking her teeth into her wing joint drawing blood. Her mother tried to buck her off so Lumina dug in deep going after the other wing joint. She took a tumble as her mom's tail flicked her off.

\_"Traitores little hatchling! How dare you defy your parents and pack leaders!" \_Striker bellowed. \_"You're going to lose those wings of yours when this is over."\_

\_ "You should have stayed in the nest Lumina! You'll be lucky if we don't kill you for this transgression."\_

\_ "Threaten me all you want, but I won't let you hurt my new pack! They did nothing to you except play a game with me. You have all the shinnies still and they apologized for their mistake. Still that isn't enough, you want to kill them for pleasure well that's not going to happen. You called me weak and pathetic so I'll just have to show you how strong I really am!" \_

Lumina blasted them again with her lightning dodging their counter attacks. She used her smaller size to her advantage as she hit them in their underbellies with her tail. When her father tried to bite her she used her own teeth to rip open his lip. Her talons slashed as she did hit and run tactics on her mother nearly blinding her. The little one was running out of steam as she tried to fly away. Her parents came at her with every intention of slaying her when a dark black shape scooped her up in his claws.

Toothless let loose his strongest plasma ball taking out both parents in one shot. Wanting to make sure they didn't come back he dived bomb them using his retractable teeth to bite chunks of their tail and wings off. Not enough to permanently disable them, but they would be recovering for months.

"Okay Toothless that's enough! Let's get out of here while we still can. Lumina, crawl on top of the saddle now!" Hiccup ordered. Once the little Skrill was safely secured to the saddle the trainer and dragon joined the rest of the questers as they reached the edge of the island. They flew out to open sea hoping to lose their pursuers.

They weren't that lucky. The uninjured members of the pack were still following them! At this point they were too exhausted to fight back. They were doomed unless by some miracle they could escape their pursuers. "If anyone has a brilliant idea to escape these pursuers I'm all ears!"

"They won't give up no matter what! Something has to give if we're going to make it out of here alive."

"Are any of them wearing or carrying treasure?" \_Nissa asked urgently.

"A few of them are wearing some of the jewelry from the cave and I spotted a couple gold pieces stuck to their talons; why do you ask?"\_

"I think I know a way to get them off our trails. Everyone hide anything you have as metal that includes your leg Hiccup. I hope this works," \_Nissa muttered as she flew into the sky absorbing the light into her scales. As soon as she reached the peak of her climb she spun around like a top as she shimmered in the light similar to how metal reflect sunlight. She also let out a croon hoping to draw attention of a special Mystery Class dragon. Seeing an approaching cloud of fog she knew here efforts would be rewarded.

The Skrills had no idea what or who was coming their way. The fog bank overlooked the riders descending on the Skrills. Roars and shouts of confusion and pain could be heard. Blood was dripping into the sea and soon the Skrills were retreating. The fog moved away at a breakneck speed towards another island. Nissa rejoined the group smiling at her trick working. She had snagged a single piece of treasure for them to take back, a gold necklace which she gave to Snotlout.

"What just happened? How did you call for another pack?"

"I'm a royal Daypeace remember? Fishlegs told me about a type of Mystery Class dragon the other day, Smothering Smokers. He mentioned that they were extremely territorial and liked metal for their nest. I hoped that their was a pack nearby due to all the treasure and called out to them to let them know where they could find some."\_

"That was some quick thinking. Good job Nissa, we'd be dead without you."\_

"Thanks Toothless, I only wish we didn't have to turn around now. We were so close to finding your pack and now there's no chance to do that."\_

"Your looking for a pack of Nightfuries? I know where they are!"  
\_

"You've seen my pack Lumina?"\_

"Not exactly, the elders talked about a nearby mysterious island only a half a days flight from here. Its protect by a series of whirlpools and thick fog, but Nightfuries have been spotted on the island along with some mysterious creatures. I can show you the way if you want."\_

"What do you say Ula? We've come this far, do we turn back now?"  
\_

"I rather we head back to Berk for safety reasons. However I know you kids would head to this island regardless of what I say so lets

go. We still have a few days left to search." \_ On that note the expanded pack headed deeper into the archipelago hoping they had a last found the Nightfury pack.

## 6. Mysterious Island

The journey to the mysterious island was a slow process due to the essential need to take care of their injuries. Both Ruffnut and Hiccup had deep gashes on their backs where the talons had lacerated them. Fishlegs had cuts all over his arms and every dragon had injuries to them. There was no place to land to tend to their injuries so they had to do their best in the midair. Little Lumina flew between each dragon carrying the medicine back and forth putting it on the gashes. She helped bandage the wounds after cleaning out the infection. She felt sorry her pack had done this though none of them blamed her for what happened. It was all part of being a Viking.

"We better avoid any further injuries since we just used the last of our medical supplies tending to our wounds. I know Ula and Nissa's blood has healing properties, but we shouldn't rely on it so heavily. They need every drop of it just to heal from their own wounds," Fishlegs informed the group.

"Our dragons seem to be holding up right now, but we better get to the island by nightfall. They need to rest in order to recover from their ordeal," Astrid commented as she rubbed some salve onto Stormfly's back.

\_"Don't worry about us so much, we've suffered worse injuries than this when we were wild. We can still fly for hours if necessary now." \_

\_ "Don't trivialize your injuries. All of us could use a good rest if we want to avoid getting an infection. This is not the time to be pushing ourselves more than necessary. We don't want to permanently lose our ability to fly because some of us took unnecessary risks." \_

\_ "Meatlug is right. It's not a race to the mysterious island. We can take it easy for awhile." \_

\_ "How much farther is the mysterious island Lumina?" \_

\_ "I'm not sure exactly, the elders said it was only a couple hours from home, but they could fly faster than I can. No dragon has ever really investigated the island. All we know for sure is that we've seen the outlines of strange creatures on the island. My former pack once tried to steal some treasure on the island; that's when they encountered the Nightfuries. They seemed to come out of nowhere forcing my former pack to retreat. Since then everyone in the area has given the island a wide berth." \_

"So how are we going to land on the island? You mentioned that it was protected by whirlpools and fog. Is there anything else that we need to be wary of?"

\_"From the description of the island I would guess that there would be strong air currents and possibly hazardous weather conditions. We



need to be prepared to push through the elements in order to land safely. Our best course of action is either to fly above the storms or skim the waters to avoid being tossed about. We'll have to decide once we arrive." \_

\_ "Until then, we should try to conserve our strength. We should also eat and drink something to speed up our recovery process. How much fresh food and water do we still have?" \_

"We have two waterskins and a couple biscuits we can share. Anybody else got some food they've been hoarding?"

"I was saving this piece of fruit for a victory celebration. Now is a good as time as any to share. Anybody got some fish for the dragons?"

"We've got a couple pieces of cod left. Its not enough to keep them from starving, but it should be enough to help with their hunger. Here you go Belch," Tuffnut said. Ruffnut fed Barf some cod too. The Twins flew down handing out the scraps as Snotlout and Hiccup gave everyone a share of their food and water.

Lumina just stared at her tiny fish and small bit of water. She didn't feel like eating, but Hiccup encouraged her to. He could tell she had a lot on her mind. Even though she had willingly left her old pack it wasn't easy for her to forget they were her family. She had loved them so much. It hurt to think about how they wanted to kill her for standing up to them.

"Hey, Lumina its going to be okay. You don't have to worry about your family hurting you anymore. We're not going to let anything happen to you I promise. You're part of this pack now and when we get back home your going to have so many friends you won't even miss your old life," Hiccup said trying to cheer up the little hatchling.

\_"Little one, would you like to ride on me for awhile? I could use the company," \_Nissa suggested as she flew next to Toothless and Hiccup. Lumina hopped on curling up on Nissa's back. Nissa reached out with her Dragon Heart connecting their souls together. She sent waves of compassion and understanding to the Skrill. \_"I know how you feel little one. For the longest time I didn't fit in with some members of my family. It wasn't anything I did or didn't do, my aunt just had difficulty in accepting who I was." \_

\_ "Did she ever beat you or try to kill you?" \_

\_ "Actually yes; she was grieving for the loss of her family and chose to lash out at me. I was so sad and unhappy. I really wanted her to love me and care that I existed. It took extraordinary circumstances for her to finally let down the wall around her heart, to accept me for who I am." \_

\_ "Do you think my family would ever be like that? Do you think I could go back there one day and the would have forgiven me for what I did?" \_

\_ "I can't be sure little one. You parents seemed to have made up their mind about you. Not all wounds or minds are changed by the passage of time. This I do know, that family isn't about blood relations. Its about being with people who love and care about you.

This family right here is made up of different species. We fight and antagonize one another, even hurt each other sometimes. At the end of the day though we still love one another. We're family through and through Lumina and now your part of that."\_

\_ "Thanks Nissa for telling me this. I feel a bit better."\_

\_ "Good. Now hold on tight. We still have a ways to go to reach the Mysterious Island." \_

An hour and half later they arrived in the vicinity of the island coming to a hover as they looked on in wonder. The island was huge nearly twice the size of Berk. From what they could glimpse through the fog they saw lush forests, sparkling rivers, and white faced cliffs. The waters near the island were dotted with whirlpools of varying sizes and there were rolling fog banks curled around the island masking most of it from the riders view. Strong winds were already starting to buffet them. The sky above the island was partially cloudy though it appeared a storm could break out any second.

"Well the island certainly is mysterious looking," Ruffnut commented.

"Yeah, I can't wait to see what kind of weird creatures are on the island," Tuffnut added.

"I rather avoid the weird possibly deadly creatures considering what happened on the last island we were on."

"Don't be such a wimp Fishlegs, try to dig down deep into your gut to be a brave Viking."

"So, how are we going to get on that island? The winds are already starting to get stronger. I wouldn't want to be sucked down into the ocean and spun around by those whirlpools."

"Maybe even we circle around we can find a less dangerous approach to get on the island. What do you think Ula, Nissa? Hey are you two okay?"

\_ "We're fine Hiccup its just I'm sensing a strong magical pulse coming from the island. Its very familiar. I can't be a hundred percent certain, but I strongly suspect a Gateway might be on that island."\_

"A GATEWAY ON THE ISLAND?!" the riders are shouted at once. Even the dragons were startled by the thought of one of those mystic portals being located on the island.

\_ "It would make sense if there was a Gateway. Lumina said there were mysterious creatures and sporadic sightings of Nightfuries on the island. If the Gateway was automatically operating on its own then different creatures could come through at any time from anywhere. The strange phenomenon protecting this island might be a result of long term exposure to the magical energies emitted from the portal." \_

\_ "Now we have to get on that island. My entire pack could be using the Gateway to keep themselves from being found. If they're somewhere else in the world we may never find them!"\_

\_ "How do you propose we get on the island? Astrid just pointed out how dangerous the approach is. I'm not seeing any other ways in the immediate vicinity to safely land on the island." \_

\_ "We might as well circle around like Hiccup suggested. Maybe the air currents aren't as bad on the far side." \_

\_ "What if there worse Belch? We're great flyers, but none of us are good enough to avoid a twister if it should pop up." \_

\_ "Then we'll just have to be extra careful. Let's start circling around." \_

The group started their slow circling as they tried to find a way to safely land on the island. As they flew around they were being tossed about by winds. They were forced to fly lower. Poor little Lumina didn't have the strength to fly and Hiccup had to tie her down to his saddle lest she fall into the whirlpools below. The other dragons were using their superior senses taking notes of what could be dangerous territory when they finally got on the island. After a half hour they returned to their original starting point no closer to finding a safe way to approach the island.

"Alright it doesn't look like there are any safer paths to the island. Our best hope is to fly below the winds and above the whirlpools. We can't really see the beaches or the cliffs through the fog so we're going to have to take a guess where we can land safely. Everyone buddy up and be ready to react in a moments notice to any dangers. Is everyone ready?" Hiccup asked. He received a chorus of yeses. Taking a deep breath he commanded Toothless to fly towards the island.

The approach towards the island was dangerous as the dragons strained their wings trying to stay aloft. Lumina joined the humans shivering as the cold ocean water splashed them when the waves got to high. Ula and Nissa tried to burn some of the fog away with their flames clearing a path. It wasn't easy as the fog quickly rolled back in. Finally they managed to touch down on a small cliff face. Everyone dismounted and took a look at their surroundings.

\_ "This place is certainly different then anything I've ever seen on my island. Those trees, the water, everything on this island is so different." \_

"This island is full of surprises. These trees don't belong in this part of the world and this rock were standing on? Its very unusual for this geographical area. I'm really starting to believe that this island has a Gateway on it."

"Where on the island do you think it could be?"

"I'm sensing a strong pull of magic coming from the center of the island. We should head that way and see what we discover along the way. Everyone stay alert we have no idea what's on this island."

The island was full of amazing wonders they had never seen before in their lives. The forest seemed to be teeming with creatures of variety of sizes and shapes. They saw composite creatures that were half one creatures such as a monkey or bird, half something else like

maybe human or fish. It was weird.

They made their way into a gorge would lead them to a more open plain further inland. They were extremely nervous having just seen the strangeness in the forest. As they walked through the gorge they stopped when they heard the fluttering of wings. Glancing up they were startled to see a band of winged horses with horns flying past them to graze on the grass above.

"What in the world are those? I've never seen anything like them before," Astrid said. All the girls seemed entranced as they watched the beasts above them.

"I've heard of them, but never seen them before. They're alacorns; winged unicorns that inhabit the deepest part of the forest. Its said their horns can purify poison and their feathers are as hard as steel. They're usually gentle creatures unless provoked," Nissa informed the group.

"Maybe we should give them a wide berth then. There's a path that we can take to avoid them. Let's go," Fishlegs suggested. The group followed his lead going deep into the gorge. As they were walking something scurried past them on its way up the cliff faces. Snotlout screamed as another creature jumped on top of his head and onto the wall. The creature turned around chittering at the intruders. It was a large tusked squirrel that seemed angry to have humans mucking up its territory.

"No way, is that what I think it is?"

"If your thinking a rataoskr then I'm with you sis. I thought those things only climbed the Yggdrasil tree to carry messages."

\_"Apparently a few of them make their home on this island. Fascinating, maybe that Gateway allows access to the nine different worlds connected to the tree you guys mentioned."\_

\_ "I hope that means we don't run into any frost giants or demonic elves."\_

\_ "I think we should keep moving; we don't know what else is in this gorge."\_

\_ "Um has anyone else noticed the ground is starting to shakkkkkkkkeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"\_

Everyone screamed as the ground in front of them erupted. Out of the whole emerged a giant red worm with teeth spewing acid at the group. The beast let out a roar as it slammed its body onto the gorge floor. The kids were sent flying in all different directions. Hookfang and Stormfly whipped into action breathing fire on the beast. It let out an agonizing scream as it sunk back into the hole.

"Is everyone alright? Good lets get out of hereeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

"HICCUP!"

The monstrous beast had come out again this time flipping the boy

into the air as it waited with jaws wide open to eat him. Little Lumina jumped on the beast slashing with her sharp claws wounding the beast. It turned its head to get at the little Skrill giving Toothless a chance to rescue his human. Lumina jumped off the beast as Ula misted it. The giant worm swayed back and forth before sinking back into the ground once more to sleep. Not wanting to get caught unprepared a second time they all mounted their dragons taking to the skies just as pulse of magical energy made its way through the gorge. They watched in wonder as the pulse covered the giant worm before shooting a light in the air. The ground caved in indicating the creature was no more.

\_"What in the world just happened? What was that monster and where did it go?" \_Lumina asked anxiously.

\_"It was some kind of giant worm. There are numerous legends from all over the world about creatures similar to that. I'm guessing the Gateway's magic just zapped the beast back to wherever it came from. Let us hope its far far away from here."\_

\_ "We should stay air born for now to avoid anymore creatures such as that. Ula, Nissa can you pinpoint the location of the Gateway by backtracking the pulse?"\_

\_ "I can feel the pull of the Gateway through my Dragon Heart. I'm sure if we keep flying further inland then I'll be able to pinpoint the exact location of the Gateway. We should keep our senses alert for any traces of the Nightfury pack. They must have carved out a territory on this island that they defend from the other creatures."\_

\_ "Agreed, let's fly!"\_

The group flew up high in the air keeping an eye out for trouble. In the plains below they saw fantastic beast going about their routine. Normal creatures such as elk and rabbits shared their space in harmony with centaurs, gnomes, and other cryptids. They passed a lake where nixes and shellycoats played together with geese and fishes. They saw normal animals such as bears fishing in rivers at the same time they witnessed a kelpi trying to lure a cub from its mother. The second the cub got to close the mother yanked it back.

"This is quite a special place. It almost reminds me of the forests of Xanadu full of wondrous creatures sharing the land together."

"It is kinda cool to be the first Vikings to have witnessed something like this. I wonder if anyone on Berk will believe us when we tell them about our journey here."

"We could always try to bring back proof. Maybe we could capture one of these beasts."

"Yeah; it would be so cool to have one as a pet."

"Pass, I want to avoid being killed or maimed."

"I'm with Fishlegs on this one. I want to be alive when I show my dad the treasure we found."

Just then Nissa halted in midair her scales glowing with the light of

the sun. Her eyes were fixated on a copse not too far from them. The call of magic was strong in her ears as she ignored everyone else. Her fixation with the copse was unnatural. She landed at the edge of the tree line returning to human form. Right before she entered the copse she felt a hand grab her arm.

"Nissa, what is it? Why did you ignore our calls? What is going on?" Hiccup asked his best friend.

"Something about this place, I can feel a strong magical pull coming from it. It's not the Gateway, the magic is more nature based. I don't know what's in this place, but I have to find out. My Dragon Heart is beating wildly connecting with something powerful. It might help us find the Nighfurries. You believe me right?"

Hiccup closed his eyes reaching out with his mind. The faint traces of Daypeace still inside him could feel what she was talking about. Something beautiful and magical was inside. The necklace the trolls had given him was pulsating with life as if it was in sync with something. "I trust you. Come on everyone let's see what's on the other side."

"I hope we're not making a big mistake," Astrid whispered. They all entered the copse gently pushing the trees out of the way and following the sound of bells tinkling. Their necklaces started glowing as they got further through the trees. Finally they emerged and what they saw was amazing. In a small hollow there was a giant tree surrounded on four sides by the different seasons. Small fluttering creatures could be seen doing fantastic magic. Whatever or whoever they were hopefully they could help them out.

Their arrival didn't go unnoticed by the small creatures. They zoomed all around the group speaking in bell-like voices as if debating what to do with them. One orange clothed creature approached Toothless speaking rapidly. Toothless ears twitched as he translated the creatures' musical notes into words.

"These creatures are fairies and we've stumbled across their home that has been temporarily moved to this island. They are willing to help us find my pack and unlock your necklaces' powers if in exchange we reset the Gateway to send them back to their native island."

—

"How can these fireflies help us? They're too wimpy."

"Fairies possess powerful magic despite their tiny size. I would trust in what they have to say if I were you Snotlout."

"Ooh I want to see some magic! Can you show us some please?"

The small creatures nodded their heads and quickly went to work. The orange clad ones started checking over the dragons giving them some tender care. Blue fairies brought water to drink as pink clad provide food from their gardens. The yellow fairies bathed the two Daypeaces in warm sunlight. The green fairies were tinkering away at the saddles and Toothless tail repairing the damage as white/tan fairies started healing the remaining wounds on the humans. A few male fairies in brown were looking at the gem necklaces rubbing sparkling gold dust on them; smiling as the necklaces glowed with an inner light.

"Their magic is amazing! My arms look like they were never torn open by talons at all."

"How are you feeling girl? They aren't hurting you at all?"

\_"Don't worry so much Astrid; its been awhile since I enjoyed some pampering. Its nice to have my scales polished and my teeth cleaned."\_

\_ "A dragon could get use to this kind of attention. Ah a little to the left, just a bit more, ah that's the spot."\_

"We thank you fairies for your kindness. Its been a nice change of pace to have people be nice to us," Ula informed the flittering beings who smiled and jingled happily that someone appreciated their work. They urged the riders to follow them back to the tree with them. "They are inviting us to spend the night with them. In the morning they'll show us the way to the Gateway."

"It will be dark soon and it would be prudent to find a place to spend the night. If they're offering us a safe haven then I'm all for it. Besides we still need to find out about the necklaces's powers," Nissa pointed out. The others nodded and followed the flittering creatures towards the tree.

It was an amazing sight to see, this huge tree was glowing as a sparkly gold dust spilled from its branches pouring into the heart of the trunk. Fairies of all colors flocked inside the tree branches letting the dust spill on their wings. They watched in delight as the different fairies gave a show of their powers. Bluish white fairies sprinkled snow on their heads as gray fairies summoned the powers of Thor creating mini thunderstorms. White clad fairies used the dust to form pictures telling stories with them. It was an amazing performance.

Suddenly all the fairies stopped flying around as they all stood at attention. Several balls of swirling dust came together as a regal fairy with pixie dust wings and dress materialized in front of the group. She wore a beautiful tiara smiling in turn at each of the Vikings and dragons. Her voice was enchanting as if entire orchestra was playing a beautiful melody. Once again Toothless translated for the group.

\_"This is the fairies queen; her name is Clarion. She says that it has been many season since her people have seen dragons and humans working together. She is utterly delight at the strength and purity of our friendship. She is grateful that we are willing to help her people by sending their home back to where it belongs."\_

"The pleasure is all ours Queen Clarion. We're always willing to help others in need, though sometimes certain members need a bit more persuasion."

"Hey, was that joke about us?"

"No fair we can't come up with a comeback!"

"Can you two please be quiet for a few minutes?"

"Sorry."

The fairies laughed at the Vikings antics having never seen humans act like this before. The dragons also had bemused expressions as they observed the playful mischief manner of some of the fairies as they pulled pranks on one another. A gentle hum from Queen Clarion quieted the fairies down.

"Your Majesty; we have traveled a long way to find my bud Toothless's pack. Have you seen them or know where they are? Also these necklaces we're wearing have special powers. Do you know what they are and how to use them?" Hiccup asked kindly. The queen nodded speaking once more.

\_"She says they have seen my kind patrolling the island with diligence. The pack has left them alone for the most part deeming the fairies as non prey and uninteresting. She says that her scouts near the Gateway have witnessed my pack passing through the Gateway to access the far side of the island. She says its impossible to get to their hidden valley without going through the Gateway."\_

\_ "At last we have confirmation about your pack Toothless. Lumina was right about them being on the island after all."\_

\_ "Hey, I wouldn't lie about something as important as that!"\_

\_ "He was teasing you little one. Belch does that at times."\_

"What did she have to say about the necklaces bud? Any information about that?"

Toothless nodded translating again. \_"The power inside the necklaces is ancient and powerful. It unites two beings as one when their hearts and souls become in synch. She says that when we connect on the deepest level the gems power will unlock. She warns that while this power is great it has limits." \_

"Two beings as one? That's something I want to see. We'll have to work on unlocking that power."

"I bet Hookfang and I do it first!"

"No we're going to do it right sis?"

"Yeah!"

"Meatlug and I have the strongest bond so logically we will do it first."

"In your dreams Fishlegs."

"Children enough your embarrassing yourselves in front of our guests. I'm sure each of you will unlock the power when the time is right. For now lets sleep we have a big day tomorrow." Properly chastised the Vikings curled up at the base of the tree sheltered by their dragons and going to sleep.

The next day after a hearty breakfast the purple fairies showed them the way to the gateway going super fast. The winds they generated made it easier to fly. An hour later they reached their destination



when some black clad fairies appeared. They sent the purples ones back before leading the riders into a hidden alcove. Nestled up against the cliff was a Gateway with an active portal showing them many different scenes. Carved on the cliff above were strange glyphs seemingly related to the Gateway. Dismounting they cautiously approached the Gateway wondering how they were suppose to fix this magical device.

"This is different then any Gateway we've come across in the past. The aperture configuration is much different then others. The crystal lattice inside the quartz crystal is very intricate allowing for a higher rate of energy flow. Even the focal point for the the light to enter is different. Instead of being round its diamond shape. The etchings also seem to be different. They don't appear to be words," Ula said as she examined the mystical device.

"The energy coming from it feels different to me. Its not as intense as the others," Astrid commented.

"The plants and rocks around here are warped by the energy though instead of being completely abnormal something else has happened. The trees and grass here to be at different stages in their life cycle despite the seasonal growth they share," Fishlegs said after examining the area.

"Is it just me or do the images inside the portal appear I don't know strange to you?" Ruffnut questioned. She and her brother were staring into the portal trying to figure out a pattern to the pictures.

"I've never seen a house like that before. What's it made of?" Tuffnut asked pointing at the image. The Gateway appeared to be showing them row of homes made out of bricks with sooty chimneys. The roads near the house also appeared to be made of the same substance.

"Check out those freaky clothes on that girl. How does she attracted anyone in that get up," Snotlout laughed at the sight of lady in a layered dress with a tight fitting corset. Her hair was hidden under her bonnet.

"I've traveled the world and I can tell you no place looks like that at least not yet."

"What are you saying Nissa? Are you telling me this Gateway not only links places it also links different \_time periods?! \_That's impossible!"

\_"Yet we've seen and felt the strange power from this Gateway. It was able to pull not only creatures from different parts of the world here; it managed to drag an entire hollow here remember?"\_

\_ "It appears to us that the archway is cracked in several spots. The etchings on the limestone seem messed up to us as well."\_

\_ "That must be affecting the Gateway in someway right?" \_

\_ "That seems most likely. If the Gateway was damaged in someway maybe the stored magic somehow caused the portal to get stuck open. With the light from the sun striking the strange focusing lens in

tandem with the strange etchings the portal could be randomly leaking power from both ends." \_

\_ "Oh come on that's the dumbest thing I ever heard Stormfly. If that's true why haven't we seen more time displacement instead of space displacement?" \_

\_ "How do we know we haven't seen both? The fairies mentioned they hadn't seen dragons and humans together in seasons. Those legendary beast we saw appeared to be healthy now, but Ula and Nissa told us last night they heard rumors that some of the creatures we saw were almost extinct." \_

\_ "Um I think the Gateway is starting to get agitated with us," \_ little Lumina quipped. The group felt the energy building up inside the portal as the images flashed at a faster speed. The etchings seemed to be randomly lighting up and the sounds of musical notes were heard as the wind whistled through the quartz crystal. They all dove out of the way as portal activated the pathway.

A group of men wearing red coats and carrying sticks appeared in front of them. They saw the kid and dragons exclaiming in an unknown language. Their sticks fired strange balls lead at them that ricocheted off the rocks. Snotlout nearly lost his head as one lead ball dented his helmet. The dragons spat fire forcing the men back through the Gateway which swallowed them up. There was an energy flash as the path reversed sending the strange men back from which they came.

"Okay, we need to fix that Gateway and now. Any idea how to do that?"

"I've been trying to understand the writing on the cliff face and I think they're instructions on how to fix and use this Gateway. Remember how we heard music right before the Gateway malfunctioned? I think the etchings are music notes. Different tones vibrate at different rates. In combination with the light and magic power it could theoretically open the Gateway to different times if the right tone was played. Maybe the key to using this Gateway is to set it to the right time and place."

\_ "I think she's right. Nightfuries are extremely intelligent and very musical. They would have figured out a way to use this Gateway to their advantage. What better way to stay safe from your enemies if your not only inaccessible, but in a different time period?" \_

"Then lets fix this thing so everything returns to normal. After that we'll figure out the right notes to find your pack bud."

Following Ula and Nissa instructions the group carefully melted in new limestone filling in the cracks. The Twins and Snotlout cleaned off the etchings while Astrid polished the lens. Fishlegs and Hiccup inspected the crystals for any cracks replacing damaged ones with new crystals they had discovered in a hidden shelf. The Gateway portal slowed down and then turned off after the repairs were done.

The next two hours were spent figuring out which melodies and etchings activate the right time/space pathway. It took a lot of work on both Daypeace parts and little psychometry with their Dragon Hearts, but at last everything and everyone was returned to their

rightful time and place. Now to use it to open the path to the other side of the island and the Nightfury pack.

"Have you figured out when the Nightfuries are?"

"I think so. From the memories I received from the Gateway the pack appears to be living in the same time period right now. They had been living in the past for a few years to try to reproduce faster, but they were forced to settle in the present when the Gateway become damaged after a serious tremor."

"Do you know what notes to play to get the pathway to open up?"

"Song, not notes. To open a pathway to the other side of the island will require singing a song from all of us to hit the right notes."

"Singing that's not manly!"

"Ruffnut can't carry a tune in a bucket."

"Hey!"

"Children we all have to try. This might be our only chance to find the Nightfury pack. The other side of the island is blocked by too many obstacles to get there by flight. Now just follow our lead and we'll be fine. Nissa what song should we use?"

Nissa knelt down pressing her hand on some writing at the base of the Gateway. Using her Dragon Heart to link everyone up she mentally translated the words into lyrics. With a deep breath they all began to sing a song from another time and place called "Testify to Love".

\_All the colors of the rainbow\_

\_All the voices of the wind\_

\_Every dream that reaches out\_

\_That reaches out to find where love begins\_

\_Every word of every story\_

\_Every star in every sky\_

\_Every corner of creation lives to testify\_

\_For as long as I shall live\_

\_I will testify to love\_

\_I'll be a witness in the silences\_

\_When words are not enough\_

\_With every breath I take\_

\_I will give thanks to God above\_

\_For as long as I shall live\_  
\_I will testify to love\_  
\_From the mountains to the valleys\_  
\_From the rivers to the sea\_  
\_Every hand that reaches out\_  
\_Every hand that reaches out to offer peace\_  
\_Every simple act of mercy\_  
\_Every step to kingdom come\_  
\_All the hope in every heart will speak\_  
\_What love has done\_  
\_For as long as I shall live\_  
\_I will testify to love\_  
\_I'll be a witness in the silences\_  
\_When words are not enough\_  
\_With every breath I take\_  
\_Will give thanks to God above\_  
\_For as long as I shall live\_  
\_I will testify...\_  
\_I will testify to love\_  
\_(For as long as I shall live\_  
\_I will testify to love)\_  
\_I'll be a witness in the silences\_  
\_When words are not enough\_  
\_With every breath I take\_  
\_Will give thanks to God above\_  
\_For as long as I shall live\_  
\_I will testify to love\_  
\_{repeat}\_

The Gateway activated opening a path to the other side of the island.  
They flew through the path emerging inside a cavern on the far side.  
They walked for half a mile then followed a narrow path down until

they emerged in a hidden valley. What they saw was the perfect home for Nightfuries. There were timber lands for nest building materials, a huge lake with warm sand, open fields of grass to roll around in and bay full of fish to eat. There were plenty of places to practice fighting and have fun exploring. In the distant they could just make out black shapes flying about. They had found the Nightfury pack at last.

## 7. Nightfury Reunion

The riders all had butterflies in their stomachs. After searching for so long and nearly being killed several times they had found the Nightfury pack. Now they were to afraid to approach the dragon pack in fear of what they would do to them. Ula and Nissa were especially nervous considering they were Draconia Daypeaces, the kind of dragons that had forced this pack into hiding in the first place. Hiccup was anxious about how they would react to seeing one of their kind being ridden and Toothless was terrified they would reject him.

"What are we waiting for exactly, an invention? We didn't come this far to turn back now. Let's go introduce ourselves to the pack before they decide to chase us off for intruding on their territory," Snotlout said.

"I don't know they look pretty strong and there are more of them than us," Tuffnut responded.

"Maybe we should have the dragons go first and then join up with them," Ruffnut suggested.

"That sounds like a marvelous idea. I'm all for it."

"I don't think we should approach them without all of us together. There is safety in numbers."

"Toothless, what do you want to do bud? There your pack so we'll follow your lead on this one."

\_"Truthfully I'm scared to even get close to them. I don't know what will happen if we approach the pack or how they'll respond to our presence. We're accomplishing nothing by standing here waiting to see if they'll notice us. I suggest we fly over there and introduce ourselves. Let's hope they respond positively to us."\_

\_"I'm sure your pack would be happy to see you again Toothless. Unlike my former pack they seem very friendly."\_

\_"If your pack attacks we'll just turn around and fly out of there as fast as we can. Agreed?"\_

\_"Agreed." \_

\_"Let's go then."\_

As everyone got on their dragon Nissa and Ula debated with each other mentally if they should appear in their dragon form or ride on one the pack's as humans to avoid creating a scene. After a few tense minutes it was decided that Nissa would ride with Hiccup and Ula would appear in dragon form in case trouble arose. It was the best

solution to protect the heir to Xanadu from harm. Slowly the group approached the pack hoping that everything would work out just fine for a change.

They had nearly reached the far side of the valley when the first patrols spotted them. In seconds the group was being circled by several Nightfuries; each who fired a warning shot at them. The group hovered in the air refusing to retreat. The patrol didn't like that coming closer at top speeds to knock them out of the sky. The riders scattered in different directions to avoid being harmed. The riders tried to get back in formation, but the Nightfuries wouldn't let them. The situation was quickly becoming more dangerous by the second.

"Toothless, you have to talk to them, convince them we're not a threat. If you don't I'm not certain what will become of us," Nissa pleaded with the dragon.

\_"What if they don't listen to me? They're body language says they won't have any problem forcing us out of the sky and attacking us on the ground."\_

\_ "If you don't do something quick they're going to strike and we'll have no choice, but to defend ourselves. I don't think you want that!" \_ Hookfang yelled, the Monstrous Nightmare was preparing to set himself a blaze. The other dragons were also preparing their special attacks; even little Lumina had her mouth wide open ready to blast the patrol with her white hot lighting. The teens were inching for their weapons.

Seeing this Toothless reacted quickly. He scanned the patrol and figured out who was the leader. A large male Nightfury with a scar on his right eye was commanding the others. Toothless fired a plasma blast getting his attention. The male bellowed in anger at him his eyes widening in surprise at the sight of a human and Daypeace on his back. The leader snarled his teeth popping into existence. The leader was about to command an attack when Toothless flew at him knocking him back with his tail. \_"I don't want to hurt you, but I can't allow you to hurt my friends."\_

\_ "Who are you and why do you disgrace us by allowing a human and Daypeace to be astride on your back? How did you find this hidden valley? Are you in charge of these other dragons in your pack? What is your business here? Speak now or I'll have the patrol attack with all our might before imprisoning you!" \_

\_ "I'm called Toothless. These humans are my friends as are the rest of these dragons. I wouldn't call myself their leader. The Daypeaces mean you no harm; in fact they are here to apologize for their actions fifteen years ago. They helped me find this valley, I have been searching so long for my pack after I was separated during the conflict. We just want to have a chance to meet the rest of the pack, for me to find my family."\_

\_ "A likely story, though I'm not inclined to agree with it! If you truly are one of us how come you haven't searched for us before?"\_

\_ "Its a long story, one I wish to share with the entire pack. Please let us have a chance to defend ourselves before you pass judgement."

\_

\_ "What makes you think I'll allow you or your pack into our den for judgment? I can just kill you now and be down with it!" \_

\_ "Roald, you know that Elder Mungo would want to meet him; if he's who we think then you know everyone would be glad to see him. I know I'm interested to confirm the rumors we've heard from our trips around the archipelago. None of them appear to be dangerous and the Daypeaces haven't done anything to us. They do appear sorry," \_ a slightly smaller male with specks of white on his under wings, informed him.

\_ "Don't get your hopes up Elvy, the chances of him being who you think are remote. Very well, your pack can come to our den, but let me warn you once. You show any hostile intentions and I will end you once and for all." \_

\_ "Understood. Lead the way." \_ The riders thanked Thor they weren't being attacked. They flew towards the bay area where the rest of the pack was assembled. The Nightfuries were resting on jetties of rocks or lounging on the beach. The youngsters were playing in the grassy areas. Dens made out of trees, rock, and mud dotted the area. The Nightfuries were all whispering amongst themselves as they spotted the riders. Everyone was nervous and excited.

"I hope they like us, you think they'll believe Toothless?"

"Don't worry, everything is going to be okay Hiccup."

Everyone dismounted and stood at attention as an elderly Nightfury with dull black scales exited his den. He was joined by a female Nightfury with plum purple scales with a white star on her forehead and a male with lighter black scales flanked him on the sides. Everyone bowed respectfully as the three approached them.

Nissa took a step forward keeping her head low. She removed something from her pocket laying it at the Nightfury's feet. It was a scroll covered in claw marks and scales. "Honorable Elder, I am Princess Nissa of the Draconia Daypeaces. On behalf of the people of Xanadu I offer up our sincerest apologize for what our pack did to you fifteen years ago. You will find our blood, scales, and claw marks of the members of the party on the scroll signifying we are at your mercy. Should you wish to carry out justice against us you only have to follow the scents to my people and they will willingly allow you to do what you see fit. I await your judgement."

\_ "It is not often one sees a Draconia Daypeace willingly offer herself up to a Nightfury. I sense your sincerity in your words. We accept your apology and we'll seek no action against your people. Indeed I'm interested in why you and this Nightfury get along so well. Please share your story with us, Toothless was it?" \_

\_ "Very well, it is a long story." \_ For the better part of two hours the group shared their story. The dragons spoke of living under the control of the Red Death; being stripped of any form of identity and forced to raid Viking homes to feed the monstrosity. They spoke of being imprisoned in the kill ring being used as practice targets. Toothless spoke of how he lost his tail fin waiting for a slow painful death only to have Hiccup spare him. At that point Hiccup started talking surprising the Nightfuries with his mastery of

Dragonese. The rider talked about how he and Toothless worked together to end the reign of the Red Death.

The hatchlings were bouncing all over the place as they heard about the adventures of the riders while the adults wondered how it was possible for humans and dragons to make strives towards a lasting peace. You could visibly see the tension as Nissa told the part of the rescue mission to Xanadu and the shock that Toothless would give his blood to save her life. The females of the group seemed impressed by hearing about the quest to find them. When the story came to an end Toothless waited anxiously to find out if the group accepted him.

\_"There's no doubt about it elder this Toothless has to be my lost child Trygve. He's the right age and he reminds me of Hadrian in his youth. He even shares our smell," \_Dagny said excitedly. Her eyes shone with tears of joy as she looked affectionately at Toothless.

\_"He has the inner strength of any Nightfury. His loyalty to this Hiccup shows what kind of dragon he is. Please Elder let him and the others stay with us. There are so few of us left and I'm sure the females would enjoy a chance to get to know him better. I know I wish to get to know my younger son once more. "\_

\_ "These riders have shown us they mean no harm. Their connection with their dragons shows me they have the potential to be true friends to our kind. Indeed their ability to see the good in any dragon and take care of this Skrill hatchling lends credibility to their claim. As for the rest of you dragons you have formed a very unique pack, one I wouldn't want to separate. You may all stay with our pack for the time being. I'm sure Trygve would love to get to know his family again. We shall have a feast tonight and share our stories with you. Then tomorrow I think we'll have some fun."\_

\_ "Elder you can't be serious! Even if this really is Trygve, I'm not conceding that fact, they are a danger to us. We have no real proof of their claims. The Daypeaces are trying to force us to lower our guard so they may finish us off! I strongly suspect they've formed an alliance with these humans for that purpose. Indeed the humans have weapons to slay us with! How can you be so certain that they haven't brow beaten these dragons into doing their bidding?" \_Roald snarled angrily. His yellow green eyes bore into the group. His hatred was toxic causing Hiccup to unconsciously hide behind Toothless for protection.

The rest of the pack howled in disbelief that Roald wouldn't trust the elder. They loudly voiced their own thoughts saying the proof of their voraciousness was right in front of them. Indeed the trolls wouldn't have gifted them with those necklaces if they were going to kill anyone. Elder Mungo silenced everyone with single plasma blast to the sky. \_"He has the right to voice his concern. Roald; you are a strong dragon and have done your best to protect our pack. I admire your courage and dedication, but my decision is final. They are not to be harmed unless they show intent to harm us. In the meantime I suggest you continue with your patrols. Dismissed."\_

Roald snarled, but flew away with some of his patrol. Toothless soon found himself being surrounded by his parents, his older brother Elvy and his little sister Elysia. She was a five year old female with



purple scales with a white dotted underbelly who tackled him rubbing her head against his body purring in delight. Seeing that Toothless needed some alone time Hiccup joined the other riders in meeting the rest of the pack. Indeed it would take all his skill to keep an extra close eye on Lumina as she played with the other hatchlings.

\_"I always hoped I would get to meet my other big brother some day! Mother told me stories about you Trygve! She said that you were quite the mischievous hatchling."\_

\_"Indeed he was Elysia. I remember the time he followed me out of the nest with trying to keep up with me as I looked for some toys for him. He got so excited he bit my tail! Do you remember that little brother?" \_

\_"I don't remember much of my life before the Red Death I'm afraid. I sort of remember your voices and playing with other Nightfuries, but my most vivid memory is being separated by the storm. I know you tried to help me mother."\_

\_"We tried to find you Trygve despite the storm. We wanted to search all over for you, but the storm was getting worse and we needed to take shelter. When we searched for a safe place to live we kept our ears and eyes open for any sign of you."\_

\_"Had we known you were under the control of a monster we would have used the full strength of the pack to rescue you. I count ourselves lucky that you were able to grow into such a strong specimen. I'm sure the females will all be vying for your affections, though your tail might put some of them off. Was there anyway to salvage it? Royal Daypeaces blood has remarkable healing properties. Perhaps the Princess could use it to regrow the fin?"\_

\_"My tail fin was ripped clean off by Hiccup's weapon and its been to long for Nissa's blood to work. Don't look so upset father. Hiccup didn't mean to hurt me so badly. He's done so much to help me fly again. He even created a tail fin that I could control so I could fly on my own. I chose to destroy it because my friendship with him is more important then anything else."\_

\_"I'm confused by why you show so much love and loyalty to the human who harmed you. I mean your stories conveyed deep personal feelings for one another, still he's human and a Viking as well. Can they really be trusted not to harm us?" \_

\_"I know from your stand point little sister our bond seems strange even unnatural. I assure that Hiccup and his friends love us with all their hearts. We may disagree with one another or even play tricks on each other. In the end I know all the riders would sacrifice their lives for us and we do the same in return."\_

\_"Enough talk about that. Come with us to our nest Trygve. We'll remind you of what you've forgotten. We can start creating many new memories starting with my well prepared reindeer cod meal. I mixed the two meats together and sprinkled a few bits of honey on it to improve the flavor. You use to love to eat this when you were small,"

\_ Dagny told her child as they entered the family den. Trees and bushes formed protective walls with warm stones and soft dragon nip on the floor. A small pool of water was nearby with plenty of sand to roll around in.

Toothless sniffed the carcass in front of him letting the smell fill his nostrils. It was the most delicious thing he'd ever smelled and it brought back hazy memories. He gulped down a huge chunk enjoying the rich flavor. Seeing how happy he was the others joined in. Soon the whole family was munching on their lunch happy to be together.

The hours passed quickly as Toothless got to know his family again. They insisted on calling him by his original name even when he asked to be addressed by his new one. Deciding to let it go for now he went on a tour of the Nightfuries home with Elysia being his tour guide. She showed him the cliffs where they stored food, the meadows filled with grass and flowers to roll around in, and the bay where several younger dragons swam around in to cool off or fish. She showed him her favorite tanning spot on the beach and the forest where she liked to sharpen her claws. It was truly a magnificent home. Also he enjoyed sparring with his dad and brother while also helping his mother out with rebuilding the den. Occasionally he saw glimpses of the riders talking or playing with other members of the pack. He also witnessed the rest of the dragons going on a hunt with one of the patrols. What he mainly noticed was that the females were all eying him trying to catch his eye.

One particular female with a mix of black and purple scales with gold eyes held his attention more than others. He noticed her when he went to help his brother out. Elvy had introduced him to his mate Ava. She and Elvy were building a nest for their new clutch hoping this time they didn't crack too soon. Though certain dragons species were full grown by three years others like Nightfuries didn't reach sexual maturity until much later in life around eight or ten. The two of them had a few kids from previous clutches, but this time they were hoping the whole group would survive.

Ava noticed Toothless looking at the female gathering material for the nests with a twinkle in her eyes. It wasn't hard to see how enamored Toothless was with the pretty female. When they returned to the nesting area with the material she called him out on it. \_"You like Orli? I'm not surprised she is highly attractable. She's Elder Mungo's granddaughter. Many males including Roald have tried to mate with her in the past, but she refuses them all. During the time when we lived in the past trying to bolster our numbers she mostly took care of the hatchlings. She enjoys helping the other mothers out with nest building or playing with the babies. That's what she's doing right now by gathering material for her friend Ido's nest. Though her time as a free female is up. Elder told her she has to mate this year or else."\_

\_ "She's very pretty however I'm not really into finding a mate right now. I just found my family and am learning more about this pack. Besides why would anyone want me as a mate? I'm damaged goods,"  
\_Toothless replied quickly. He started digging into the sand forming a nice hole for the eggs to rest in. Elvy lined it with some pine needles and moss. After dropping some grass into the hole he looked up at his little brother.

\_ "You're not damaged goods Trygve. Just because you are missing part of your tail doesn't mean you aren't attractive. You have such a strong body and we've all seen how fast you are. From what you've told us you're one of the greatest fighters and loyal to your friends

no matter what happens. Those are qualities a female looks for in a mate."\_

\_ "I don't know, she hasn't even looked at me let alone had a conversation with me. How am I suppose to catch her eye if she won't interact with me?"\_

\_ "Maybe you should ask your human for advice. He seems to have two mates so he must be quite the catch."\_

\_ "Astrid is Hiccup's girlfriend and Nissa is his best friend. He doesn't have two mates!"\_

\_ "Honestly Elvy stop teasing him."\_

\_ "I'm just trying to help. Seriously Trygve if you want to get Orli's attention just put yourself out there. She prefers honesty and kindness over brute strength and domineering behavior. Tonight at the feast offer her something to eat. She enjoys fresh salmon if you can get it."\_

\_ "Above all treat her with respect. She's not a prize to be won, but a companion whose company you enjoy being with."\_

\_ "Alright enough shesh didn't I just say I wasn't looking for a mate? I'm going to go see how the riders are doing. See you later!" \_ Toothless bounded off. His brother and his mate could only smile shaking their head at the antics of a young dragon in love.

The night sky had just fallen as the stars came out to play. The riders of Berk and their dragons had returned to the communal area with exciting stories and plenty of food to share. The dragons had returned with an abundance of food ranging from caribou to mounds of fish. Lumina was already drinking her berry juice with the other youngsters. The humans were content to cook their food over the roaring fire. Each of them was babbling about their experiences with the pack. The two Daypeaces were content to sit on a log looking a bit more relaxed then before.

"Its been quite a day for all of us hasn't it Princess? I never thought we'd be able to be in the presence of a Nightfury pack without fear for our lives. It goes to show how much can be accomplished through courteous behavior and being apologetic for their actions," Ula said as she bit into her fish.

"I know what you mean. Our opposites are not as cold heart or evil as we were taught to believe. I have spent the day showing that Daypeaces truly seek peace and cooperation above all else. I don't know if I made much of an impression, but the older generation seem to be warming up to me."

"They seem to warming up to all of us. We actually got to spar with some of them and they didn't hold back. It was the best fight of my life!" Snotlout exclaimed showing off his many cuts and bruises with pride. The twins were also displaying their burns with joy. Fishlegs was busy writing as fast as he could in the Book of Dragons updating the Nightfury pages. He was so happy that he nearly broke his charcoal pen in half twice.

Astrid was leaning up against Hiccup who was holding some fruit over

the fire. The flames licked the fruit causing some of the juices to flow. Removing the smokey fruit he split it in half giving some to Astrid who playfully kissed him. Blushing he bit into his own piece enjoying the mix of sweetness and smoke. He felt someone nudge him in the back. "Hey bud, you have a good time with your family?"

\_"Yes, I really enjoyed spending the day with them. My younger sister has so much energy. She loves to play tricks on me. My brother was overprotective, but he gave me some good advice. My parents are very wonderful and loving. It feels good to be reunited though I'm having a difficult time with them calling me Trygve. The name doesn't feel as if it was a part of me. It was something literally from another lifetime. I'm not the small three year old associate with that. I'm Toothless not Trygve."\_

Hiccup patted his friend on his head assuring him that everything would be okay. He just needed to give it some time. Any further discussion was put on hold as Elder Mungo flanked by several of the older members entered the commune. After restarting the flames they formed a semi circle around the bonfire. This signaled the rest of the pack to draw closer as they found comfortable spots in the trees, on some rocks or the ground. Toothless tensed up as he felt someone move closer to him. He yelped in shock as Orli brushed up against him.

\_"Would it be alright Toothless if I sat next to you? Your spot has the best view and I'm curious to know more about your relationship with the humans?"\_

\_ "Um no problem here let me warm it up for you," \_Toothless replied nervously. He blew some fire on baking the slight mound of earth next to him. He flattened it up a bit with his tail gesturing with his paw that she could join him. Orli gave him a gummy smile turning around a few times before settling down to listen to her grandfather. \_"You can settle down next to me if you want. I'm sure you would feel better reclining then sitting up so stiff. Don't be shy there's plenty of room."\_

Hiccup had to hide a smile as he watched his dragon nearly trip over his own feet as he settled down next to the female. "Remind you of anyone?" he whispered to Astrid. She playfully poked his head with two fingers. "Yeah you. I guess its true that your pet starts to take after you."

Elder Mungo cleared his throat and then launched a plasma ball into the sky joined by others. The colliding blasts created a mini firework show with dazzling colors and shapes of different dragons. Under the light of the moon the riders saw how stealthy yet elegant the Nightfuries could be. Several pairs sky danced for them. They flew high into the sky doing triple loops and tight turns never touching one another. They spun around one another creating infinity symbols. With shocking speed and precision the pairs came at each other clutching each other paws as they fell towards the ground. At the last second they broke apart skimming over the humans head before taking their rightful places among their family members. The last pair was of Dagny and Hadrian who came to settle to his right. Toothless felt someone jump on top of him. Turning his head he saw his little sister giggling. He nipped at her and she took cover on Orli's left side. He could smell his brother and Ava nearby enjoying his discomfort.

\_"My fellow pack mates tonight is unlike any other we've celebrated. A child we thought lost to us forever has returned triumphantly to our pack. Not only that he has helped do the impossible, uniting dragons and humans under the banner of friendship, he has brought a lasting truce with our opposites. Though many of us still harbor grudges for the events that unfolded that night fifteen years ago whose to say this isn't what was always meant to happen?" \_

The pack looked at each other in confusion? How could being forced on the run by Daypeaces be a good thing? The Vikings teens also had confused expressions on their faces as they tried to figure out what the elder meant. A booming laugh filled the communal space causing everyone to look at the elder wondering if his sanity was gone.

\_"I understand your confusion so allow me a chance to elaborate. The loss of Trygve was saddening enough. It felt as if the fates were against us when we discovered our ancestral refuge was washed away by a storm and then the Daypeaces showed up. The resulting conflict left many of us injured and scattered across the sea."  
><em>

"Again I apologize for my people's action in this. We had come to this part of the world via a Gateway hoping to find someone who could help bring peace to the world. Fighting your pack wasn't suppose to happen and could have been avoided if we had talked instead," Nissa said regret etched on her features. "I was part of that fight and though I refuse to fight neither did I try to break it up. I should have done more to prevent the injuries and loss of life. It is because of our actions that Toothless was unable to find you for so long."

Mungo crooned at her shaking his head. The blame didn't lie entirely at her feet. They too could have done things differently that night. Avoided the pack or retreated instead of pressing it. That was in the past and the Daypeaces had inadvertently saved them as well. \_"After encountering your pack we knew the dangers of returning to our old home. We had begun the search for Trygve when we felt the pull of the Red Death trying to control us. Luckily some random shots from a passing Viking ship broke the spell. We decided to find a new home. Our search was long and difficult. Much like your quest I'm sure you've run into trouble along the way. At times we despaired ever finding a save haven for us. That is when we felt the familiar power that was in the wake of the Daypeace's constant appearances. We found this island and learned about the Gateway's powers."\_

"How long did it take you to learn to operate it without accidentally sending you to another time and place? Was it damaged when you found it or did that happen afterwards?"

\_"Silence human! We don't want to hear your voice tonight!"\_

\_ "Roald, behave yourself. Curiosity is something to encourage," \_Mungo reprimanded the patrol leader with a hard tail whack. "The Gateway was functioning properly when we stumbled across it, but it took us a full two years to master it. Once we figured out how to slip back in time we made sure no one could come to our side of the island. We lived comfortably in the distant past, for several years. It was a utopia for us having a place to raise our hatchlings, hunt the bounty of prey and worry not about being hunted down. They about

four years ago an underwater earthquake upset the island. The Gateway was damaged forcing us into the present."\_

Mungo closed his eyes, his wings and tail drooping at the memory of that day. There home had nearly been ripped apart by the magical energies leaking out. In his mind he could picture the frantic scramble as they attempted to save any many of the youngsters as they could only to watch them be washed away in a floor or buried under the rubble as the cave collapsed. He felt someone touch his nose sharing his memories. Opening his eyes he saw Nissa's hand on his snout, her eyes glowing as she used her Dragon Heart to link with the minds of her friends.

Toothless, forgot he was a ghost as he fought shadows of mythical creatures as they hunted the Nightfuries. He tried to strike down prey as it passed through him harmlessly. He listened to the sounds of misery and death all around him unable to do anything about it. He felt someone touch him and nearly sank his teeth into Orli as she tried to calm him down.

\_"It's alright Toothless, the chaos and confusion lasted only a fortnight. Eventually the Gateway returned to semi normal operations. We tried to fix it, but our paws weren't delicate enough for that kind of work. It took the whole pack's effort, but we managed to secure a safe path to our side of the island on semi regular intervals in the present. We started patrolling the whole island after that. Defending it from intruders to prevent them from discovering us. We also made some friends and used our expand territory to our advantage. Everything is fine now and thanks to you bringing the humans here we have no more worries about invasions or surprises."\_

"Orli is right bud, the Nightfuries are safe here. No ones going to hurt them and the other dragons respect their territorial rights. With us at peace maybe they won't have to hide so far away. Just think if you hadn't been lost they might never found this place or we'd never become friends and the war would have gone on forever. It appears that everything happens for a reason huh," Hiccup said hugging his buddy letting him know it was okay. The others did the same thing with their dragons understand the point Elder Mungo was trying to make. Safety and peace was something everyone wanted.

It was getting late for the humans, Snotlout nearly falling into the fire pit because of how tired he was. Some of the elder members of the pack showed them the dens they had set up for the riders. They had created temporary ones by carving out some space in the trunks of trees and filling them with leaves. Because the space was so small only two members could sleep in each den. Not taking any chances Ula pair up Astrid up with Ruffnut, Tuffnut and Fishlegs, and Hiccup with Snotlout while the two Daypeaces would sleep together. As they were settling in the dragons were also curling up in a large cave den not to far away. It was the only place big enough for all the dragons, save Toothless, to sleep in. After heating up some rocks and arguing about sleeping pallets the dragons dosed off.

Toothless was sleeping with his parents and sister. He'd offered to join with the night patrol with his brother, but was gently told that it wasn't necessary. He should relax not feeling obligated to help out. There would be plenty time for that later. Toothless was understandably nervous when he heard that. He was restless as he

tried to get comfortable on his rock circling around and flopping about as he tried to get comfortable, but his mind wouldn't let him rest. Not wanting to wake his family up he quietly crept out of the den heading to the bay to think.

The moon's reflection lit up the lake as the sounds of the frogs chorus filled the night air. He felt the breeze tickles his scales in the cold night air. Shivering slightly he lapped up the cold, clear water. As he wiggled around on the banks of the lake trying to find a comfortable spot he smelled someone approaching him. He got into a defensive posture baring his teeth and puffing up his wings to make himself bigger. His eyes widened in surprise as Orli landed softly in front of him. Her gold eyes shimmered in the moonlight as she crooned at him. \_"Couldn't sleep huh? I guess being reunited with your family and hearing the pack praise you made you to restless to sleep."\_

\_ "Not exactly, I mean yes I'm still reeling from the shock of actually finding my family once more. I am amazed by how accepting everyone was. I feared that they would reject me because of my lack of ability to fly and me bringing humans and Daypeaces to the island. I'm elated that everything has worked out so well."\_

\_ "Then what is the problem Toothless? Why can't you sleep?" \_Orli questioned. She walked over and sat down right next to him, their wings cloaking one another. Toothless tried to ignore the pounding of his heart. It was taking every ounce of self control not to react to her intoxicating scent. Amused Orli gently placed a paw over his enjoying how Toothless tail started wagging back and forth. \_"Are you having trouble sleeping because your separated from your human friend? Nothing is stopping you from bringing him into the family den. I'm sure your parents and sister won't mind."\_

\_ "Hiccup is sleeping and I don't want to wake him up. He's had a long hard day, they all have. Having a chance to meet with other Nightfuries and learning all about them has tuckered him out. I have never seen someone so in love with dragons before. He constantly takes risks putting himself in harms way to protect us or learn more about us."\_

Orli nodded her head in understanding. Hiccup and the others weren't the same as other Vikings. They had noble dragon qualities that they displayed to the pack. She recalled seeing the twins rough housing with the youngsters earlier that day not minding the nips and scratches. Indeed Snotlout had gone out of his way to be part of the spars among the males to display his dominance. No matter how many times he got burned he got right back into the fray showing he wasn't a coward. She let out a giggle as she recalled Fishlegs tenderly helping with the nest building for the eggs acting more like a mother then any of the females. Astrid and Hiccup had also worked themselves to the bones fixing dens not minding the hard labor. \_"Your pack is diverse, but strong. They care for one another deeply. I admire your altruism for taking in the little Skrill. No hatchling should feel unloved."\_

\_ "If living with humans has taught me anything; it is the importance of looking out for one another even when your different. That's why I can't sleep. I love being with my family and the chance to stay here forever is tempting, but..."\_

\_ "You don't want to abandon Hiccup and your pack. They're as much

part of you as we are. Everyone assumes your going to stay here except I see how much you want to go back. Berk sounds like a lovely place to live even if the dangers there are overwhelming at times," \_Orli said. She rubbed her head against his in an affectionate gesture surprising Toothless. \_"You may have noticed I have no mate. My grandfather wants me to mate to help our species survive. I want to be a mother really I do. The problem is none of the males here display the traits I want in a mate. Sure many of them especially Roald are tough, strong, and capable mates, but their personalities are lacking. Roald sees everyone as a potential threat, he would have us conquer the entire island instead of being satisfied with what we have here in this hidden valley. I've seen his cruelty to others. He is not a dragon I would chose as a mate."\_

\_ "Are you saying that you like me as a potential mate? Why I'm damaged, I live with humans and..."\_

\_ "You are loyal and kind. You forgave Hiccup for injuring you even risking your life for him. I see that kind of compassion as noble. You protect your pack while being friendly to many different dragon species. I have seen how smart, generous, and loving towards other. The fact that you were willing to risk so much to find us tells me you are worthy partner. If you'll have me I would be honored to become your mate Toothless."\_

Toothless smiled at her with happiness in his eyes. He had noticed Orli's qualities admiring her devotion to others and her willingness to accept the humans. She was a tease at times. He liked how wise she was, her empathy being a great asset to her. He would have her as his mate. As the two got ready for a little foreplay the night was shattered as he heard Hiccup screaming for his life in the forest. \_"HICCUP!" \_He dashed past Orli at full speed heading to the forest with her on his tail.

Hiccup was shoved against a tree bleeding from a head wound. He tried to use his knife to cut his attacker, but couldn't reach it. He kicked his legs feeling his prosthetic buckling under the strain. "Get off me, I'm not here to hurt you! I wouldn't kill a dragon!"

\_ "I'll make certain of that once you are gone!" \_the dragon hissed. In the cover of the trees the moonlight was blocked making it nearly impossible to see who the attacker was. Hiccup was to frightened to recognize the voice. He feared his life was over as the jaws came towards his head when someone tackled the Nightfury off of him. Gasping for air he blinked trying to figure out what was going on. "Toothless be careful! Ahhh." The teen felt his prosthetic give out as he sank to the ground. His lungs felt like they couldn't get enough air in them. He tried to move out of the way of the two dragons only to have someone gently drag him to safety seconds before Toothless was tossed against the tree he had been up against.

\_ "Are you alright? I smell blood," \_Orli asked hurriedly. She licked the blood from his face trying to get the wound to stop bleeding. Her eyes darted from the teenager to the fight. Toothless had recovered rearing up on his hind legs and slashing with his front claws. The attacker ducked under snapping his jaws at Toothless's underbelly only for him to jump backwards. He whipped his tail around smacking the other dragon in the head. Though dazed the attack had the presence of mind to flick dirt into Toothless's eyes blinding him.



Taking advantage of this the leapt on top of him trying to rip apart his wings. Toothless rolled onto the ground over and over trying to shake him off. He flipped his opponent off as the trees scattered their leaves over the two combatants. Growling in anger he fired a series of plasma balls which clashed with his foes causing a mini explosion. Panting hard Toothless got ready to defend himself once more as his foe took to the sky only to be brought down by the Berk dragons.

Orli let out a sigh of relief as her pack along with the humans descended on the scene. Nissa rushed over to tend to Hiccup's bleeding head as Orli informed her grandfather about what she had seen. Her story was interrupted as Stormfly and Hookfang dragged their captive towards the group. The fight had destroyed the tree tops letting the moonlight in. It wasn't as much of a shock as they all saw Roald being held between the two dragons.

Mungo was not pleased at all barring his teeth and roaring loudly. He allowed Toothless family members to go check on him and tend to his open wounds as he stormed over to Roald. \_"What possessed you to attack our guests Roald? Did you believe that you could go against my wishes? Not only have you broken our word, you insulted our honor and abandoned your patrol! What do you have to say for yourself?"\_

\_ "That human was going to kill us! He left the den heading into the woods. I saw him sharpening his weapon. He was heading back towards the hatchlings. He would have slaughtered them. I had to stop him!"

\_

\_ "Hiccup would never attack a group of hatchlings!"  
><em>

"I wouldn't do that! I was answering the call of nature and got lost. I only took out my knife because I was nervous. I thought I heard something then you came out of nowhere and tried to kill me!"

\_ "Likely story slayer!"\_

\_ "Don't you dare threaten my friend or..."\_

\_ "You'll do what pet? Face it you don't belong here Trygve. Your a lapdog not a Nightfury! You don't deserve to be part of this pack!"\_

\_ "Is that a challenge? Then I accept. Tomorrow you and I will finish this fight and if I win you will apologize to my friend or be exiled."\_

\_ "When I win your life and your companions will be forfeited!" \_

In the dawning light everyone was anxious as Roald and Toothless squared off in the meadow. Ula had begged for Mungo's help demanding he call off this challenge only to have him refuse her. He insisted that this challenge was the only way to end the conflict between two rivals. His only concession to the fight was that Hiccup was allowed to ride Toothless so he could fly. The other riders were forbidden from interfering with the fight.

The astriction in the athier was altiudinous. The entire pack was

whispering among themselves as they wondered who would win this fight. The stillness was broken when Roald made the first move by charging forward blasting away. Toothless ducked under the shots firing his own only to have his foe leap over them. His teeth popped out of his jaw as he whipped his head around going for Toothless throat. Not having enough time to dodge instead he hit him with the flat side of his tail ruining his aim so he missed. Roald hissed in anger rearing up on his haunches taking jabs at Toothless who met him in turn. Hiccup was holding on for dear life trying his best to avoid the claws.

Seeing he couldn't win the fight on the ground Roald flared his wings taking to the foggy sky above. He looked behind him as he watched the duo come streaking after him. All he had to do was remove the scrawny human from his back and then that sorry excuse for a Nightfury would plummet to his death. He spun around firing plasma balls before looping around to avoid being caught in his opponents crossfire. Smirking he flew higher into the cloud cover getting ready to set up an ambush.

"He's leading us into a trap bud, be careful."

"Don't worry about me I can handle anything he does. Just try to stay safe and protect my tail from being ripped off." \_ That being said the duo pursued their quarry into the clouds ready for anything. Toothless's perked his ears up and took a deep breath trying to scent his prey. His eyes were tracking the clouds as he looked for the outline of his prey. He needed to remain focused and calm if he wanted to win this fight.

His ears are what saved him as he heard the faint sounds of wings flapping towards him. He barrel rolled out of the way as Roald came from behind claws slashing. He wasn't able to escape completely as a slight cut appeared on his flank. He twisted in mid air raking his own claws as Roald came back for another pass and was reward as he managed to land a hit on his chest. Hiccup opened his tail fin more allowing for the duo to speed up as the two Nightfuries engaged in hit and run tactics trying to land critical blows. It was all Hiccup could do to hang on and not get caught up in the fighting.

"You're doing great bud we just need to find his weak spot and exploit it. Come on think, what are the weak spots in a Nightfury ahhhhhhhh!" Hiccup screamed as Roald shoved him out of the saddle. Toothless struggled to remain aloft but without someone working his tail he couldn't. Soon he was dropping through the air at an alarming rate. Roald refused to relent as he dove after the two of them to continue his attack making their deaths painful as possible.

Toothless and Hiccup were falling side by side being spun around by the air currents. The teen tried to reach for the saddle only it was just out of reach. Toothless was spreading his wings trying to control his descent hoping to glide only to let out a yelp of pain as a plasma ball scorched his right wing. It appeared neither one of them was going to survive. As they looked at each others faces something happened. They both refused to give up having come to far to be defeated. They couldn't and wouldn't allow this bully to beat them. Apart each of them would fail, but together there was nothing they couldn't do. Hiccup's emerald necklace started to glow and in seconds the shine engulfed both rider and dragon.

Down below in the meadow the Nightfury pack was greatly agitated as they hissed and growled at the sight of seeing the duo fall. The riders and their dragons had to be physically restrained along with Toothless family to prevent them from going up there to rescue them. They prayed to their Gods hoping for a miracle and were rewarded as they watched in disbelief as the two were engulfed in the light show. When they could see again everyone gasped in amazement.

Hiccup was once again half human and half dragon. He had Toothless's wings, eyes and ears, and fully functional tail. His fingers were now claws with hard scales covering his underbelly and legs. Only it appeared that it was more than a fusion of the two of them. Hiccups human parts seemed to have increased in muscle size and his mind was now one with Toothless. They both were in synch as they worked in one body to battle Roald as they collided in mid air.

"That is the coolest thing ever! I can't wait until that happens to me!" Snotlout shouted. He pumped his fist in the air cheering his cousin on as he watched the hybrid stab the challenger with his knife.

"They've fused together into some kind of ultimate dragon warrior," Fishlegs said.

"The amount of pain they can bring to Roald is unbelievable," Ruffnut added.

"Yeah there's nothing they can't do now. This is in the bag!" Tuffnut exclaimed

"Hold on a minute didn't the fairy queen say something about this power being limited?" Astrid questioned.

"She did Astrid, I have a feeling this power up has a time limit or worse the injuries in this form will affect both. They need to end this fight quickly," Nissa whispered in fear.

In the sky above the hybrid of Hiccup and Toothless were discovering the difficulties of having two minds in control of the same body. Toothless who had much more experience flying was trying to control the wings and tail while Hiccup worked to defend themselves. Every time they fell out of synch the transformation almost fell apart, but they held it together. Zipping around at high speeds they tried to draw Roald closer to the ground so they could force him down hopefully trapping him in a tree or something, but he wasn't having it. If anything seeing the hybrid infuriated him even more.

\_"You make a mockery of what it means to be a Nightfury! We are the greatest dragons ever, the masters of this island! Ever since you came here everything has fallen apart. I will not let you win this fight Trygve nor will I let you mate with Orli. She is mine!"\_

\_ " \_\_\*\*We are not a mockery, we're a symbol of what it means when human and dragon become one! Also Orli is not a prize to be won!"  
\*\*\_The hybrid duo tackled him mid air using their leverage to flip him and tear Roald's body. The knife was driven deep into wing joint drawing blood. In this much pain Roald would be forced to land, but not before he played a foul trick.

\_"If I can't win then I will ensure that my pack is not tainted by you! They will suffer for allowing you into the fold!" \_Roald spun around and unleashed a rapid fire of plasma blasts, but instead of aiming them at the hybrid he aimed them at the terrian. One blast ripped apart the cliff walls causing a landslide heading straight for the youngsters and hatchlings, who had been told to stay in a cave out of the way of the fighting, and was going to bury them! Another blast struck the den area setting it a blaze as a third fire ball ripped open a pathway for the lake water to come flooding towards the nesting area for the eggs. A forth shot set the meadow on fire as the remaining blasts aimed to destroy the hunting grounds. The entire valley was about to be wiped out!

\_"\*\*"No! What are you doing? There your family, your pack!"  
\*\*\_

\_"Only those of pure Nightfury grit will emerge from the chaos. With me as leader I will ensure that we never have to hide again. We'll rule over all the other packs and slaughter the humans as they have done to us!" \_Roald roared before continuing, \_"What are you going to do about it? You can't stop me and save everyone at the same time."\_

\_"\*\*"We trust our friends will do whatever it takes including give their lives if it means saving the pack. You on the other hand are going straight to Hel!" \*\*\_ There was no emotion in their shared mind only ultra focus as they knew what had to be done. Sparring only a quick glance to see the other riders reacting the hybrid flew forward into battle ready to kill their second dragon.

The riders had acted quickly despite the chaos. As the entire pack shouted and flew about in confusion about what disaster to handle first they automatically responded to the threat they could handle the best. Snotlout urged Hookfang to fly as fast as he could towards the landslide hoping he could melt it back into the cliff face or at least redirect it away from the youngsters. The twins and their Zippleback tried to put the fire in the meadows saving the confused Nightfurries below at the same time Astrid, Fishlegs, and their dragons rushed to save the den and nesting grounds. Ula went with one patrol to put out the fires on one end of the valley as Nissa tried to evacuate the Nightfurries to safety. At the moment none of them cared if they lost their lives as long as the pack and valley were saved.

Snotlout heard the sound of wings beating near his head and ducked as Lumina passed by him in a desperate dash to get to the caves. The little ones were to frightened and scared running around in circles as their cave started to collapsed on them. She fired a a bolt of lightning disintegrating some of the rubble and getting the little one's attention. "Lumina; guide them out of there as fast as you can! Hookfang and I will try to stop the landslide best we can!"

\_"On it Snotlout you can count on me!" \_Lumina shouted as she zig zagged between the rubble and managed to land near the cave entrance. Her eyes rapidly scanned the group doing a head check. \_"Come on we need to get out of here! That landslide is going to be here any second!"\_

\_ "Nix's wings stuck! We can't leave her behind!" \_A hatchling wailed. Indeed a tiny little Nightfury had her right wing trapped

under a fallen stalagmite. She hurried over joining in with the others trying to shove the rock off our pull her out. The cave was collapsing all around them and the dirt was making it hard to see. Lumina refused to give up slashing and gnashing until the rock was broken and the hatchlings wing was free. Lumina scented for the cave entrance only to end up confused. \_"Where's the exit?"\_

\_ "Hold on we'll echolocate. Pingggggg! There this way!" \_The group hurried to the exit jumping and flying through the entrance in mad scramble to get out of the danger. The little Skrill urged the frightened hatchlings to follow her down the cliff into the trees, but the landslide was coming to fast. They couldn't outrun it or out fly it with their little wings. They were doomed!

"No ones going to perish or my name isn't Snotlout Jorgeson oi oi oi!"

\_ "Let's show them the power of a Monstrous Nightmare!" \_

For the first time ever Snotlout and Hookfang were acting in perfect harmony which activated their opal necklace. The purplish glow surrounded them lighting up the sky. In a burst of swirling fire the hybrid of the two emerged. Hookfang's tail, wings, horns and mouth, along with several rows of scale covered a buffer Snotlout who was now more nimble and flexible. The hybrid set himself on fire as he turned himself on his side.

His burning talons cut a deep trench into the side of the mountain swallowing up much of the landslide, still a good portion continued on its path towards the valley floor. Using their combined brain power the hybrid cast a steady stream melting the rocks and earth turning into sludge. As its speed slowed down slightly he whipped around in a atom like pattern gathering the mess into a giant ball that harden quickly. Using all his strength he rolled the ball onto his horns and flung it over the cliff walls onto the far side of the island. Exhausted the hybrid clumsily landed on the ground reverting to their separate forms. The cheering youngsters piled on top of both of the shouting praise for saving their life.

Meanwhile in the distance Stormfly and Astrid were doing their best to save the den area. Stormfly attempted to create a firebreak to prevent the spread of the blaze. At first it seemed to work as the fire stopped spreading towards the dens. That's when the strong winds streaming across the valley sent embers flying all over the foliage and rocks. Astrid ordered Stormfly closer hoping to use her wings to dispel the oxygen only to have a burst of fire send them careening backwards. "We need to put those flames out quickly or those dens are going to go up in smoke!"

\_ "Agreed let's do it together!" \_The sapphire shine spread across the two as they merged into one being. In a sparkling dazzle the hybrid emerged with all the pride found in a Deadly Nadder. Besides the tail and wings, the hybrid sported the bony crest combined with Astrid's long flowing hair. Her legs ended in large powerful talons as her human chest expanded to allow more air. The scales protected her face from the leaping sparks of fire.

Their minds as one Astrid/Stormfly snatched mounds of dirt with their talons dumping it on top of the flames smothering them. Whipping her tail about the spikes tore through the air taking several of the

burning tree tops with them towards the bay area. Seeing a minor success they caged in the flames with the spikes slowly smothering them as more dirt and then sea water was throne on top of them. Landing on the ground the hybrid used their massive wings and talons to beat the rest of the flames out. At last the dens were safe and the two blissfully separated smiling at a job well done.

While Astrid and her dragon had been saving the dens the hybrid form of Fishlegs and Meatlug were busy using their girth and jaws to cut a trench for the flood to bypass the nesting grounds and into the bay. It was an unusual hybrid nature as Meatlug's wings had doubled in size to accommodate Fishlegs girth and his arms had become thinner though still retaining their strength so he could manipulate his tiny dragon claws more easily. Seeing that the flood was still coming to the nest the duo decided to try a different strategy.

Gathering as much sand and rock into their dragon mouth as possible they fired six lava globs into the water creating a thick cloud of steam evaporating most of the water. With the flood's power greatly reduced the hybrid spun around like a corkscrew using their tail to create a line of sinkholes for the remaining water. At last the flood was contained and after making sure the nests weren't damaged the duo relaxed as the topaz yellow glow turned them back into two separate entities.

The Twins and their dragon were discovering the strangeness of being a hybrid as the aquamarine glow vanished. They kept the long necks and jaws of the Zippleback along with one arm each of the twins on their wide chest. They were still connected through the wings and tail, but they found for a few brief moments they could separate into separate beings, though flight became unstable. The twins realized that their gas and sparks would just worsen the problem with meadow being on fire. As much as they liked mayhem and destruction they didn't plan on leaving the Nightfury's homeless.

\_"\*\*"Tearing up the grass is only slowing the fire down its not stopping it," \*\*\_Ruffnut wailed as she tried to smother the flames with their tail. She yelped in pain as the fire burned through the scales towards the bone.

Tuffnut used his clawed human foot to stomp as much of the fire out, but the smoke was starting to choke the both of them. \_\*\*"We can't do this alone. We need more help. Hey if any of you Nightfuries are still in the area we could use the help! \*\*\_Not waiting for a sign of acknowledgment the the duo separated rolling all over the place smothering flames and ignoring the burns as they reconnected. The Nightfuries must have heard them because Toothless family were using their tails and wings to smother the flames. At last the meadow was no longer a ranging inferno and the Twins could become two people again as they started to attend to Barf and Belch's wounds.

Nissa was flying through the air using the power of her amethyst necklaces to boost her magical strength. After evacuating most the elderly dragons she called on her magic to cast rainbows across the valley. Everything touched by her light healed or stopped burning as the light extinguished the blaze. Through her Dragon Heart she felt Ula and the patrol finish their battle with the blaze. Sinking to her knees she was caught by Elder Mungo who helped her stand. Before she voiced thanks a blur of black and violet streaked past her into the air. "What the Orli? What is she doing?"

\_ "Putting an end to the traitor Roald and saving her chosen mate I presume." \_

In the skies above Roald and the hybrid of Toothless and Hiccup had their talons locked together biting each other. The duo was trying to blast fire into Roald's mouth, but he wasn't going to fall for the same trick. Head butting the hybrid he pushed off from him lining up a shot to take them out once and for all when a blur spun around. Ignoring the dizziness he tried again and again only for the same results. \_ "Who dares defy me and ruin my claim to victory?!" \_

\_ "You will not claim victory cheat nor take another life! You have endangered the back and dishonored us all! The only reward for you is death!" \_Orli screeched firing a plasma blast at him burning a whole in one of his wings.

That was the opening the duo needed. Using the last of their strength the fired their own blast into Roald's screeching mouth causing him to combust. Unfortunately that was the last of their power and the duo reverted back to their natural forms. Hiccup managed to grab onto Toothless saddle and the two flew down to the cheers of the whole pack happy that everything had worked out so well.

It was nightfall by the time the clean up effort was done. Much of the valley had been destroyed however enough had been saved so they didn't have to move. It would take time to rebuild, but the Nightfuries were confident their Valley of Night would be a paradise once more.

As the victory celebration got into full swing Elder Mungo called for attention. \_ "Today has been an event full day. We were betrayed by one of our own and nearly lost are home. We owe our eternal gratitude to the Riders of Berk for saving us. Trygve, I know it was not easy taking another life, but know that what you did saved many more from being lost. You are a hero." \_

\_ "Thank you Elder Mungo. I only did what anyone else would have done." \_

\_ "Don't be so modest Trygve. You were every bit a true Nightfury today," \_Hadrian told his son proudly as he placed a gently claw on his shoulders.

\_ "I never imagined that so much would happen when my baby returned. I'm glad that your safe and sound now," \_Dagny purred as she licked his wounds closed and gave him an affectionate head rub.

\_ "You're a tough role model to live up to big brother. I hope I can become a hero just like you," \_Elysia said as she also hugged him.

\_ "Can't believe you also scored one of the pretties females around as your mate. Before you two get busy your going to have to help me on patrols as my second. You've earned it," \_Elvy told his brother, but noticed his frown. All of Toothless's family, the entire pack could sense something had changed. They waited patiently as Toothless gathered his thoughts before speaking.

\_ "Mom, Dad, brother and sister; everyone it has a been a dream come

true finding you. I am so happy to be welcomed among you and know that I'm accepted among you. I wish I could stay forever with you, but I can't," \_Toothless said as he looked at each of them. Their hurt and confusing was plain so he continued. "\_I'm not the same little Trygve you lost fifteen years ago. My name is Toothless and my life and heart is on Berk that is where I belong. The peace on Berk is new, but tentative. It has a chance to succeed only if Hiccup and I remain together. Please understand that I'm not doing this to hurt you. I promise to visit often and your welcome on Berk anytime."\_

Elder Mungo nodded in understanding. \_"You have lived a life separated from us, but know that you will always be apart of this pack. You shall be our ambassador to the humans and open the line of communication. It is time for us to take are place once more as protectors and friends to all dragons. We will protect this island and it's inhabitants from harm, we shall attempt to make peace with other packs. No matter what happens we will never wage another war unless absolutely necessary."\_

\_ "We shall miss you Try I mean Toothless, but we'll visit often. We hope that you and Orli will be happy on Berk."\_

\_ "We will mom I promise."\_

"Ah this calls for a show and song. I know just the one. Give me a beat," Nissa said as the dragons and humans started playing the tune she gave them. Using her Dragon Heart she linked the entire pack and projected their memories as images in the firelight. She started dancing a bit as the firelight shone around her. The first image appeared in the light showing Toothless and Hiccup meeting as she opened her mouth and started singing, "The Great Divide."

\_ Ooh-ooh\_

\_La-Da-Da Da-Da\_

\_I never knew I lost ya till I found ya\_

\_And I never guessed how close you were to me\_

\_And now I wanna throw my arms around ya\_

\_Tell a thousand tales that will astound ya\_

\_Everything about you tells me this was meant to be\_

\_Don't you see\_

The images shifted showing Toothless and Hiccup stopping the Red Death, the events from Snoggletog, them starting the Dragon Academy with their friends.

\_I'm on your side\_

\_Let's take this ride\_

\_And together we're facing the world\_

\_Doing things nobody's done before\_



\_And the great divide\_

\_Doesn't seem so wide anymore\_

\_Naaaa\_

The riders and dragons were captivated as Nissa danced about pulling them into the dance. The dragons bobbed their heads back and forth crooning back up as the images showed their adventures on Berk so far.

\_I can recall life was like without ya\_

\_and now it feels like thou\_

\_we never been apart\_

\_Tell me every time you think about ya\_

\_anything you say i'll never doubt ya\_

\_Were meant to be together\_

\_I can feel it in my heart\_

\_Its just the start\_

\_I'm on your side\_

\_Let's take this ride\_

\_And together we're facing the world\_

\_Doing things nobody's done before\_

\_And the great divide\_

\_Doesn't seem so wide...\_

Hiccup recognized the scenes of the adventure to Xanadu, the aerial battle, the peace between. He watched as the riders stole the Book of Dragons back. Nissa smiled as she came to stay on the island and start her peace mission. As she sank on the images started to show their quest for the Nightfuries.

\_And if you'll be there beside me\_

\_when i fall\_

\_(and you'll be there beside me)\_

\_And when it every come\_

\_we'll take it all inside\_

\_I'm on your side\_

\_Your great divide\_

\_doesn't seem so wide\_

The last images showed the events of the last two days as everyone sang the chorus one more time united in harmony.

\_I'm on your side\_

\_Lets take this ride\_

\_And together we're facing the world\_

\_doing things nobody done before\_

\_And the great divide\_

\_Doesn't seem so wide anymore.\_

## 8. Safe Return

The sun was shining, the winds were blowing gently and the echos of laughter could be heard throughout the village of Berk. In the month since the riders had left on their quest the people of Berk had been doing their best to continue on as they waited for the teens to return. Everyone had been very pleased when two huge Timberjacks and a trio of Whispering Deaths had appeared riding rafts full of lumber and few sacks of precious metals had arrived only two days after the questers called. The surplus of supplies kept Gobber busy in the forge making weapons for all hours of the day.

In the absence of his princess and the surprise arrival of several "guests" over the following weeks Steinar had kept very busy with his own project. He had taken it upon himself to help teach the children valuable lessons in their schooling in the new school he had built for them. He had persuaded Stoick the value of education would go a long way in helping the next generation of Vikings defend their home from threats. The school would also keep the children busy until they were old enough to start dragon training.

At the moment Steinar and his students were finishing up a special project he'd been working on. After learning that the Vikings kept chronicles of their families exploits, as well as trees to show who was related to one another, he decided to create the Dragon Chronicles identifying every dragon on the island by name, pack, and image. The project would help match up dragons and riders in the future. It was also a great way to distinguish Berk's dragons from wild ones. The little ones had loved the idea of drawing and coloring pictures of the dragons and some of them had even come up with good names, though it was mostly the adults who did that. In turn the dragons had fun modeling for the pictures and taking turns telling spellbinding tales of their pack's glorious history.

"Alright children we need to finish up your pictures of your Terrors. Remember to make them as accurate as possible and include their bios underneath. When your done with them I'll add the pages into our Dragon Chronicle," Steinar told his class. He had implemented one of Hiccup's suggestions in letting the children bond with the Terrors and practice training them before they moved up to bigger dragons when they got older. Both the children and the Terrors seemed to get along quite well with one another.

"Steinar I'm done I'm done! Look doesn't my picture match up perfectly with Fang?" Uta, the little girl with the lamb doll, asked jumped up and down waving her picture all around. On her tiny shoulder a blue and green scaled Terror nipped playfully at her ears. He too was proud of his young mistress's work.

"Uta is a talented artist. She might even be better than Bucket," Fang informed the Daypeace. He and the other Terrors were the last pack of dragons to be illustrated and of course though their images were the best seeing as how the children took so much time making them. "We can't thank you enough for suggesting this project Steinar. Keeping our history alive orally is a great tradition between dragon packs, but with a written copy of our history our stories will last forever."

"No need for thanks I'm just doing my best to be a service to the people of Berk. Now is everyone finished with their pictures? Ah good let's have them, now no need for shoving one another. Okay let's bundle them up and bind them together. There now, the Dragon Chronicles is finished thanks to all of you!"

"Yeah we did it!"

"Alright we're done finally."

"Do you think Hiccup and the others will like it?"

"When are they and the others coming back? It's been almost a whole month since they left on their quest. Shouldn't they be back by now?"

"Children I'm certain that there is no need for alarm. Hiccup and the others know what they are doing. I just talked with Princess Nissa the other day and she assured me that they were on their way back. Hopefully they'll arrive home in the next day or two. Now why don't you all go scampering back to your parents' homes. I have to deliver this Chronicle to Stoick. I'll see you tomorrow."

Steinar smiled as he watched the children run off with their dragons chasing after them. It was nice to know the younger generation was embracing peace between humans and dragons though he wondered if that would extend to other tribes. Dismissing the thought for now he hurried to the Great Hall to meet up with Stoick. When he got there he noticed Gobber was trying to calm his friend down as the chief paced back and forth anxiously. He was clutching the magic opal mirror in his hand so tightly that Steinar feared it would break. He cleared his throat drawing the attention of the two men. "Have I come at a bad time? I was hoping to present you with the finished Dragon Chronicle. The children just completed the illustrations of the Terrors and wanted to know what you think."

"I'm sure that whatever they did it was a fantastic job. I'll look at it later, Gobber, would you please take it for now?" Stoick said distracted. He glanced at the mirror's reflective surface anxiously. He had tried to call the questers, but had received no response. He was starting to sweat profusely at the thought that something might have happened to his son and the other riders. "Why haven't they called? It's been two days. What if something has happened to them? They could be hurt or lost. We should send out a search party to find

them."

"Stoick you need to calm down and take a few deep breaths. Hiccup and the others are fine. They told us they'd be back on Berk soon. They probably just have the mirror buried at the bottom of a satchel is all. Trying to dig that out in mid flight would be impossible," Gobber told him as he patted his friend on the back. "Its best that you don't get yourself worked up in a tizzy. You'll see Hiccup and the others will return in no time with enough booty to satisfy the whole island and wondrous tales to be sung over a hot mead."

"Gobber is right Stoick. If something had happened I'm certain I would have sensed it with my Dragon Heart through the bond I share with Ula and the princess. I can feel them drawing closer to the island every second. I wouldn't be surprised if they show up right now in the village square."

The doors to the Great Hall were flung open as Mulch rushed in. "Stoick, the riders have been spotted by one of the ships! They'll be here within the next few minutes! Everyone's gathering in the square to greet them!" Steinar gave the chief a triumphed look that he ignored as they all rushed out of the hall to greet the return of the successful questers.

Everyone was cheering and hollering joyfully as the riders settled down into the square as the Daypeaces reverted to their human form. The teens were instantly surrounded by their families receiving hugs and kisses from their worried folks. The dragons were calling out to other members of their packs. Little Lumina was jumping up and down racing around introducing herself to everyone while Orli snuggled against Toothless listening to the murmurs of astonishment from the Vikings assembled.

Stoick rushed over to Hiccup engulfing him in big hug nearly breaking the poor boy in half. "Hiccup, I was starting to wonder if I'd ever see you again. You were gone far longer then I liked. I know that you want to be like your mother, but please don't go on another quest for awhile please."

"Okay I promise Dad can you put me down now please your starting to hurt me," Hiccup told him gently. Stoick released the boy who took a few deep breaths trying to get the air back in his lungs. "So, how have you been Dad? What have you been up to since we left?"

"We've finished with the inventory awhile ago. We managed to find more supplies though I hope you found more resources on your quest for the future. The timber and metals you sent back helped a great deal although we could have done without the influx of the dragons over the past few weeks."

The teens looked at him confused by what he meant when Steinar cleared his throat. As everyone looked at him he let out a series of different roars calling for other dragons to appear. As they waited he explained what had happened first by showing the completed Chronicle. "It has taken this past month, but we have finished a very important project. Every dragon that belongs on Berk has been cataloged, named, and we have begun the process of pairing up dragons and humans. As you can see the children have found happiness with their Terrors and the adults have started to bond with some of the other dragons though we have a way to go with that."

"Steinar, what is going on? Why were you making those calls?" Ula demanded. Her eyes widen as the teens felt smiles appear on their faces as several familiar shapes appeared from all corners of the island in the square. There were two Timberjacks, three Whispering deaths, a quartet of Snaptrappers along with a family of Changewings who greeted them with respect. Lumina could barely contain herself as she rushed over to introduce herself only to have Orli pull her back with by the tail. "Oh, I didn't expect this."

"What are you all doing here? Why aren't you on your islands with your packs? When we told you about Berk we didn't think that any of you would come here to take up residence," Nissa laughed.

\_"Alpha thought it would be a good idea for us to see how the symbiosis between human and dragon worked in case humans came to our island in the future. Tunneler agreed and so the five of us were chosen to come live here. We've taken up residence in the forest tending to its needs," \_Pine, the female Timberjack explained. She introduced them to her mate Fir.

\_"We've been kept quiet busy using our sharp talons to help carve boats and build houses. Its a lot of fun actually, we don't normally get to be this creative."\_

\_ "Besides tending to the forest the three of us have been assisting Mulch and Bucket on the farm making the land fertile," \_ Whisp, a male Death added. His companions were Hiss and Murmur who talked about helping out on the Dragon's Outcropping creating wells for fresh water and storage places for food. It had been a challenge learning to get along with other dragons nearly breaking out in brawls, but it was slowly coming together.

\_"What about the rest of you? I don't smell your scent in town and none of the packs mentioned you helping out with preparations on the Outcropping," \_Meatlug voiced.

\_"What about you four? Have you managed to avoid getting into arguments with yourself long enough to find a place to settle?" \_ Belch asked.

\_"Last time we met up with you Snaptrappers you couldn't agree on anything. So why come to Berk?" \_ Barf wondered.

\_"Simple curiosity really. Some of us wanted to learn how to work together better without all of our heads arguing with one another. We've talked with some of your fellow Zippleback's who have have been helping us learn to work in unison instead of arguing with one another."\_

\_ "The four of us have taken up residence on one of the nearby sentry islands. Its a good enough distance that we can live comfortably while at the same time be in roar distance to warn of approaching dangers. There are plenty of mud wallows for us to play in."\_

\_ "Swiftwing wanted to follow up on your visit and Obsidian thought it would be a healthy experience. So here we are. We've also taken up to living on one of the sentry islands making daily patrols. This place is certainly interesting place to live. We've sensed some magical properties near here which is very interesting considering

none of you practice magic." \_

"Enough about these dragons what about the two you brought back with you? Who are these lovely ladies oof!" Gobber found himself being bawled over by an energetic Lumina. The little Skrill couldn't contain herself as she started yapping away.

\_"Hi how are you? My name is Lumina what's yours? You smell funny like a lot of burnt shinnies. Do you have a shiny collection like my old parents? What's your job? Do you know where I can find a lady name Gothi? She's going to be my human!" \_ Lumina babbled happily. She sniffed the air and jumped off the fallen Gobber darting among the crowd sending everyone stumbling about. She finally came to rest at the foot of the old mute who was looking down at her with a calculating look. Lumina shrank under the old woman's gaze bowing her head with talons drawn in to show she wasn't a threat. \_"Are you Gothi? The riders told me that you are very wise and you're a healer. The twins thought that we'd be a good match. I promise to be a good little dragon and do whatever you tell me to do. Please accept me." \_

Gothi knelt down smearing some black tar around Lumina's eyes. The Skrill tried to wipe it off, but the elder held fast giving her a stern look. The Skrill calmed down realizing that her eyes didn't hurt so much from the sun thanks to the tar. Realizing the purpose of the tar; she rubbed her head affectionately against her human's hand a strong bond forming between them as strong anything. At last Lumina had found a home.

"Well at least Lumina and Gothi have bonded. That's nice to know we didn't bring her home only to be rejected again. Oh before I forget everyone as you can see we found the Nightfuries. A full disclosure of our heroic deeds and long torment will be told tonight over our welcome home feast. As for right now may I introduced Toothless mate Orli?"

\_"A pleasure to meet you all, I hope that we all become friends and that I prove myself worthy of being a dragon of Berk. Who knows, I may even form a bond with one of you," \_Orli told them politely. She seemed to be enjoying the attention she was getting and bowed her head in respect to the chief acknowledging him as her new leader. \_"Your son has told me much about you Stoick the Vast. You seem like a strong capable leader who cares deeply for his pack, I mean tribe. It is an honor to meet you." \_

"The pleasure is all mine. I'm very pleased to see another Nightfury. I had thought my son's quest to find your pack would be in vain though I'm happy to be proven wrong," Stoick told her. He patted her head before bellowing to the entire crowd. "Tonight we'll feast in the Great Hall to celebrate the return of our young questers. Let us share in their bounty and add their stories to our songs of heroic deeds!" The whole island joined in the cheering at such a glorious idea.

That night the Great Hall was filled with happiness and cheer as the fires crackled warmly. Plates piled high with delicacies such as wild boar, salted salmon, and fresh cabbage were being served as an abundance of amber spiced mead was passed around for all to share. Dragons were curling up in the corner sharing their bounty and sharing stories with one another. Everyone was in good spirits as the

teens started telling their tales and sharing their bounty with the tribe.

"As you can see from my newly finished maps we managed to explore more than double the known region. I have marked each island we've been to with a name, notes about what we discovered and warning of where Vikings shouldn't go. The maps are drawn to scale so it will be easy to use them. I urge you all to take a look at them at some point," Ula informed the tribe as she handed out her maps. The master one would be placed with the other maps in the Hall's archive while the smaller ones would be given to the families.

The riders took turns talking about their adventures sharing the highlights and displaying their bounty. At first no one really cared about the dozen or so new plants and animal species they identified, but when they started talking about the isles full of dragons that perked everyone's interest.

"We were in the fight of our lives when we went up against those Timberjacks. Our hatchets could only deflect the youngsters attack for so long and trying to get them to listen to us was a challenge in itself. At the same time we were wondering if the others had survived the cave in or had become dinner for the Whispering Deaths. We'd lost hope for awhile. Imagine our surprise when the Twins crazy antics saved us," Astrid regaled the group.

"What can we say, everyone enjoys a bit of pain once and a while," Ruffnut replied hitting her brother in the head for emphasis.

"It was amazing to learn about the symbiotic relationship between the two dragon species and how it benefited the whole island. I wouldn't have believed it if we hadn't witnessed the results ourselves. I wrote all about it in the Book of Dragons for future generations to enjoy."

"I'm sure they'll appreciate it Fishlegs, but not as much as the metals, lumber and of course amber we found. Take a look people we got two full bags of this stuff. Ladies I'm sure you'll enjoy using it for jewelry and spice, but think of what we can trade this for. This is some quality amber!" Snotlout said as he passed around their bounty to everyone assembled. The women were in awe at the quality of the amber imagining all the uses they had for it. Combined with the metals and lumber it was a good haul from one island.

The Twins too turns sharing the adventure to reach the Snaptrapper's home. The struggle to survive the storm and nearly losing Astrid to the sea frightened the younger children until they started laughing at hearing how the riders had to strip after finding shelter. Several of the adult men teased the boys for going along with Ula's insistence they bathe only to be hushed by their wives.

"Trying to out fly a whole pack of Snaptrappers without being lured in by their sweet scent is crazy. We were surrounded on all sides and no matter where we went we couldn't escape them. When forced to fight we attempted to keep the four heads from agreeing which was easier than you think. When you combine our heads with Belch and Barf there's nothing we can't do. Well you know except maybe dive bomb and jump onto the flailing necks of wild Snaptrappers trying to calm them down without getting eaten. That's what Nissa and Hiccup did to get them out of their frenzy. After that we all shared a mud bath that

was a lot of fun."

"Not after having to get clean it wasn't! I'm just happy our bounty was enough animal fat and salt to help make new bars of soap. We can even add in some of those flowers to make a fragrance. Oh here's our bushels of plants and herbs. We managed to keep the stuff pretty fresh. A lot of it can be used for medicine, but those seeds and bundles here are for planting new crops. Wait until you taste the fruits they are to die for."

"This fruit is tasty Mulch. I won't forget that I ate this anytime soon," Bucket said cheerfully.

"That's good to know because it will be a while before we have this fruit again," Mulch replied.

It was Fishlegs turn to regale the tribe with tales of adventure and fun on Trollapolyze Island. When he got to the fact that the trolls actually existed and could perform magic Gobber started pumping his fist and poking Stoick with his metal hand. "See I told you trolls exist. You didn't believe me, but I was right!"

"Well they don't steal your socks so you were wrong about that!"

"Can I continue my story please? It was fascinating to watch the trolls in their native habitat. The underground grotto was such a dazzling place with its sparkly cave tops and homes carved out of rock. Did you know trolls are nocturnal and that they are excellent musicians using their clubs to create a variety of sounds to listen to. What is most fascinating was their ability to create spell beads to perform their magic even if it was only the females who could do it. It would be wonderful if we could perform magic spells unfortunately they said that you have to be born with the talent to do so."

"If you think the trolls were fascinating try finding a Changewing! Their acid breath was nasty. Swiftwing had such a temper. I was really concerned that they were going to kill us! We were very fortunate that you and Toothless were able to convince Ruby and Seasonscales to speak up otherwise we'd all be dead."

"It was easy Hiccup I just had to act like the princess I am. No one defies royalty if they want to avoid getting into trouble. Besides both of them were more than ready to confess their secrets. I think the best part of that adventure was getting the gem necklaces and awakening their power."

"What power is that?"

"Keep listening Steinar and you'll learn. Snotlout you want tell your dad how you procured that gold necklace?"

Snotlout was only too happy to boast about their adventure. He was making wild gestures as he explained how they searched for treasure for hours. He talked about how they followed Lumina's trail and the fight of their lives against the Skrills only for the others to interject when he started going on how he single handedly discovered their weakness and went about saving them.



\_"You should be really proud of your kids they were totally amazing! My old pack was, " like grrrrrrrr kill slaughter the intruders" and they were like "take that you overgrown lizard!" It was scary watching everyone fight because Skrills are very dangerous when angered. They had their talons slicing and firing white hot lightning bursts. The Twins nearly died a few times when they got separated from their dragon and Stormfly's fire wasn't deterring them. I was so impressed by the partnership between Hiccup and Toothless. It was Nissa who managed to clear the way, but my parents wouldn't give up the chase. Ula was going to sacrifice herself to save us, but then I totally went primal on my parents! I showed them I was a real Skrill with the talons and teeth to match! I thought we'd never get away lucky for us Nissa managed to attract the Smothering Smokebreaths. I'm glad that Snotlout got to keep his one shiny!" \_

"I deserved it after the trouble we went through with your pack. I never want to go up against another enraged Skrill pack as long as I live."

"At least we made the right choice in adopting her into our pack. Without her we would have never discovered the Mysterious Island or the Valley of Night."

"Astrid right, okay here's what happened once we found the Mysterious Island," Hiccup said. Everyone was on the edge of their seats as he talked about their march through the forests and gorge as they followed the pull of magic. The kids gasped when Hiccup talked about nearly being eaten alive by a giant worm. The girls were giggling when they got to the part about meeting real life fairies.

"You're making that up! There is no way you met tiny little people who could perform magic," Spitelout laughed. It was to crazy to believe. "Did you hit your head to hard son?"

"Its no joke Dad, we did meet fairies! They used their magic to heal us and fed us. They even showed us where the malfunctioning Gateway was hidden. This Gateway wasn't like the usual ones, this one not only let you travel through space it also did time. I nearly got my head blown off by some weird guys in red coats or something!"

"It was destruction on a whole new level. We could have died," Tuffnut pointed out.

"At least then we wouldn't have to work so hard to fix the Gateway. Singing was not much when you can't carry a tune," Ruffnut said.

"At least fixing the Gateway let us find the Nightfury pack. That was an epic adventure on itself."

"Oh really, please tell us how you avoid death once more and made friends with a full pack of dangerous dragons," Mildew muttered only for a well placed mist by both Steinar and Ula knocking him out for a majority of the next week and half. Both Honor Guard members kept a close eye on the old man knowing he would betray them the first chance he got and they were determined to avoid that.

"The Valley of Night is the most beautiful dragon habitat in the world. There were woods, meadows with a huge lake and sparkling bay. The encircling cliff faces were dotted with multiple caves and the beaches were warm. It was a virtual paradise. We saw many different

generations. They were lead by Orli's grandfather Mungo. He listened to us and then accepted us into the group even after Roald, a rival male wanted to kill us! For a minute I thought we were goners until Toothless's mom and dad vouched for us."

\_"My heart nearly exploded out of my chest when I was reunited with my family. I learned that my original name was Trygve and that I was loved deeply. My mother Dagny is very beautiful, kind, and prepares a delicious honey flavored fish dish. My father Hadrian and my brother Elvy are magnificent specimens. They are calm, patient and very brave. My brother takes good care of his mate. My little sister Elysia is quite the mischief maker. She loves pulling pranks and her favorite thing to do was tackle me in attempt to get me to play with her. My family accepted me injury and all. Elder Mungo was right when he said it was fate that led me to being lost and found."\_

\_ "I'm just pleased that destiny brought us together. You are a true honorable Nightfury. Don't be so modest Toothless, tell them how you fought the traitor Roald to save your human's live. Speak of your noble deeds fighting him in a challenge and not cheating as he did; how you and your pack saved our home," \_Orli encouraged her mate nuzzling him. At this point everyone was waiting to hear about the great battle, but Toothless was tongue tied.

The riders and their dragons took over as Nissa linked the whole tribe together in her mindscape reliving their memories. They felt as if the joining of the human and dragon happened to them as they witnessed the transformation. Their parents were so proud of the way they handled the crises managing to save the Valley from destruction admiring their cunning and ingenuity. While the other Vikings rejoiced in a successful kill of an obvious dangerous dragon Stoick could sense how much the killing of Roald affected his son and dragon. He hoped they would be able to deal with it. The memories ended showing the bonds of trust between the Nightfuries and the riders.

"Everyone I know I am not the only one who is proud of what these teens accomplished. A month ago they went out on what many would consider a nearly impossible quest to find the missing Nightfury pack all while exploring the archipelago wonders bringing back treasures and knowledge. To have accomplish their goal while sustaining minimal injuries under the harshest of circumstances is a testimony to what kind of Vikings they are. I say they have proven themselves worthy of the honor of being seen as adults in the eyes of the tribe. From this day forth these riders are to be given the responsibilities and glory given to all adult members of the tribe as their stories are forever made part of our history. Three cheers for the riders," Stoick announced joined in loudly by the whole tribe cheering and congratulating them. The riders and dragons all hugged one another proud of themselves for accomplishing the impossible.

\_The rewards reaped from a successful quest can't always be measure in monetary value or the amount of honor you receive. Nor can it be determined by the length or if you return successfully with all your limbs intact. Sometimes the best reward is the memories you form on the journey with your friends that will last a lifetime. \_

End  
file.